

BEYOND THE BARS

2025



*CELEBRATING
15 YEARS OF
CONFERENCES*

SANKOFA

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
MARCH 8 & 9, 2025
PLENARIES AND WORKSHOPS**

COLUMBIA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Welcome to Beyond the Bars 2025: Sankofa: Looking Back to Move Forward

A note on Covid and masking:

To be in solidarity with our elders, immunocompromised attendees, and our broader sick and disabled kin, we strongly encourage wearing masks at the conference, except when eating.

Conference Schedule

SATURDAY

Sankofa Plenaries and Workshops

Columbia School of Social Work

9:15am–10:00am: Registration and Light Breakfast

10:00am–1:15pm: Morning Plenaries

1:15–2:00pm: Lunch

2:15pm–3:30pm: Workshop Block #1

3:45pm–5:00pm: Workshop Block #2

5:30pm–7:30pm: Screening of Time II and Talkback
with Fox and Rob Rich

SUNDAY

Sankofa Plenary and Workshops

Columbia School of Social Work

9:15am–10:00 am: Registration and Light Breakfast

10:00am–11:30 am: Morning Plenary

11:45am–1:00 pm: Workshop Block #1

1:15–2:00 pm: Lunch

2:15pm–3:30 pm: Workshop Block #2

SATURDAY MARCH 8TH

Plenaries and Workshops

MORNING PLENARIES

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HEALING & REST IN THESE POLITICAL TIMES & BEYOND
(10:00AM-11:30AM)

Room 311 / 312 (Overflow on the Concourse Level)

Panelists:

Esperanza Martell, Casa Atabex Aché

Cara Page, Changing Frequencies

Vincent Duarte Pinedo, H.O.L.L.A.

Moderator: Wakumi Douglas, The Givers Revival

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RIGHTS, RESISTANCE, AND RESILIENCE (11:45AM-1:15PM)

Room 311 / 312 (Overflow on the Concourse Level)

Panelists:

DaMareo Cooper, Center for Popular Democracy

Emani Davis, The Omowale Project

Andrea James, National Council for Incarcerated &
Formerly Incarcerated Women & Girls

Dhaksh Sooriya, Surveillance Resistance Lab

Moderator: Andrea J. Ritchie, Interrupting Criminalization
& In Our Names Network

WORKSHOP BLOCK #1

2:15 – 3:30pm

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**ART, HARM AND HEALING: A JOURNEY IN RESISTING LIFE
SENTENCES**

Room 311/312

In this workshop, we will share and discuss a statement
on Art, Harm and Healing co-authored by a group of men
facing life sentences in Illinois who are members of the

Prison+Neighborhood Arts/Education Project's Think Tank. The statement was written for a visual art exhibition, *More Beautiful, More Terrible: Humans of Life Row*, centered on the experiences, dreams and lived realities of people facing life sentences in Illinois. Because of past controversy in response to a special issue of an art/poetry magazine dedicated to featuring works by incarcerated writers and artists several years prior, the Think Tank engaged in discussions about how to prepare for potential blowback when the exhibition opened. After much debate and discussion with each other and with justice practitioners invited into the discussion, the Think Tank decided to write a statement to address why they were organizing this exhibition, how they viewed themselves in relation to art and creativity, and their understandings of harm. The intention for this statement on Art, Harm and Healing was to address what often goes unsaid or unspoken in art advocacy spaces featuring works by incarcerated artists: harm that was carried out by people who are incarcerated and the harm incarcerated people have experienced themselves.

We invite attendees to join us to learn about the process that the Think Tank engaged in to write this statement and to discuss the themes raised in the statement. What does it look like to create a "safe space" behind prison walls that acknowledges the humanity of people facing life sentences and enables vulnerability and healing through academic and artistic endeavors? How can the arts bring grace and understanding to one another? How can we address harm while recognizing each other's humanity?

Presenters: Alice Kim (she/her), James Soto (he/him), Michelle Daniel Jones (she/her), Neomi Rao (she/they)

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METHOD OF THE STREETS: ON REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUS BUILDING IN ILLINOIS YOUTH PRISONS + CUMBERNAULD PAMPHLET MAKING WORKSHOP

Room 301

Galvanized by Martin Sostre's work, this workshop materially connects participants to a group of young people incarcerated at a "juvenile (concentration camp) prison", who handwrote the zine *Martin Sostre: Life & Legacy*.

In learning about his resistance to prison censorship & repression and revolutionary 'method of the streets' education, authors have curated this zine to educate other young people inside prison. They emphasize their handwritten work "to remind readers of the painstaking process necessary to avoid censorship and that we do not have access to technology or word processing systems that would simplify writing".

To grasp this spirit, participants will read & respond to the zine

in their own handwriting, creating Cumbernauld Pamphlets. Authors will be virtual to answer questions on process and what solidarity from folks outside may look like. Work created in this workshop will be scanned, printed, & circulated in Illinois Youth prisons to bridge conversation across walls.

Presenters: Denzel Burke, Indigo Wright, Mamayan Jabateh, Alfredo Medina, Latrell Mason, Amare McNeil, Keon O'Connor, Garrett Felber

PATHWAYS TO FREEDOM

Room 302

As a community of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated scholars, Opportunity Scholars is dedicated to breaking barriers to education and employment for those impacted by the legal system. This presentation will explore practical strategies and models that prioritize both academic achievement and holistic well-being, demonstrating how we can foster environments where students thrive academically and personally. We will share actionable insights on supporting mental health, career readiness, personal development, and community building, illustrating how these elements create meaningful, lasting outcomes for justice-impacted individuals.

Presenters: Linda Small, Victoria Scott, Mara Sanchez, Erica King, Nicole Lemay, Darlene George, Abdi Awad, Shaun Libby

THE POETRY OF RAP FOR JUSTICE-IMPACTED LIVES

Room 304

In a partnership with Music on the Inside and Writopia Lab, the main goal of this workshop is to explore the value and power of songwriting and rap for voices that have been muted by incarceration. Rap, a musical style that involves rhythmic and rhyming speech over a musical accompaniment, can evoke a wide array of meanings and great rap songs have something to say. Working with a musician, wordsmith and music producer, participants will be introduced to the intricate literary forms in Rap, figure out their own message, build a beat and write their own Rap songs.

Presenters: Alina Bloomgarden and Malcolm Knowles

CONFRONTING GOVERNANCE THROUGH PUNISHMENT IN 2025

Room 305

In the short few months of 2025, we have witnessed an increase in both the scale and visibility of punishment from

the state. From deporting immigrants to punishing activists and organizers, many who are now considered dissidents, the federal government has fully embraced governance through punishment. We are seeing the tactics of this type of governance roll out daily as people are fired, defunded, fined and, of course, incarcerated for refusal to adapt to the new agenda. At the same time, informing on colleagues or neighbors has been incentivized, as those who comply are both pardoned from punishment ,and rewarded in other ways.

This workshop will dig deeper into the current context of state punishment in the United States and will explore how we can intervene, including building on existing organizing efforts, as well as using narrative advocacy to draw attention to the punishment paradigm.

Presenters: Members of the Justice Beyond Punishment Collaborative including Jose Saldana, Toni Smith, Tess Weiner, and Cameron Rasmussen

TRAINING A CIRCLE KEEPER: BUILDING ABOLITIONISTS, BELOVED AND CARING COMMUNITIES THROUGH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRAXIS

Room 404

Restorative justice is all about relationship building, and our workshop will be about engaging in hands-on community activities to learn about the principles of restorative justice, the role of the circle keeper, and scenarios to practice what we have learned. The workshop will be led by a group of 8th-12th grade students who are a part of the Circle Keepers: The Whose Voice? Our Voice Fellowship program trains and empowers them as restorative justice practitioners, researchers, artist-activists, and community organizers to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. Our main goal is to reflect on how restorative justice and themes of abolition build for safer and accountable relationships, communities, and societies while also inviting participants to dream and act upon what restorative justice cohorts of circle keepers can look like in your schools and how to support youth in this work.

Presenters: Imani Wilson, Bri Ruiz, Bashar Assaedi, Emily Duenas Rativa, Mololuwa Fasola, Orla Flynn, Noura Ayouba

HEALING THE LEADERS: LESSONS LEARNED AND PRACTICES ROOTED IN ANCESTRAL WISDOM

Room 405

Movements for justice and liberation rely on the dedication of

leaders who inspire from the frontlines and those who tirelessly work behind the scenes to support those most impacted. The Healing the Leaders Retreat is an intentional space designed to honor and restore these leaders—those who carry the weight of driving systemic change and nurturing communities in transformative ways. At its core, the retreat centered on healing practices deeply rooted in indigenous and ancestral wisdom, emphasizing the importance of looking back to draw on cultural and spiritual traditions for sustaining leadership and movements.

This workshop, inspired by the Legacy Project's Healing the Leaders Retreat, invites participants to explore how healing-centered approaches can restore energy, build resilience, and sustain leaders who are often overlooked yet essential to our collective liberation. Through interactive discussions, healing exercises, and practical tools, this session models a healing justice approach that prioritizes both individual and community well-being. Participants will also hear from retreat attendees who share firsthand experiences of how intentional healing spaces have transformed their ability to lead and support others.

Presenters: Richard Smith, Éva-Milan Zsiga, Kiki Dunston, Shawn Young, and Halima Gellman

CONNECTING THE DOTS: FAMILY SEPARATION ACROSS CARCERAL SYSTEMS

Room 406

The so-called “child welfare” (family policing) system is a carceral system. Like the prison, juvenile punishment, and deportation systems, the family policing system wields family separation as a weapon to coerce, control, punish, disappear, and destroy BIPOC communities. These carceral systems cast structural inequity as individual pathology to justify its existence. The panel will draw forth the connections between the family policing system and other sister carceral systems to discuss how our movements can collaboratively build our capacity to resist family separation in all forms.

The panel includes speakers from Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), Blessings in Transformation, Bx (Re)Birth & Progress Collective, Intuned Consulting, Movement for Family Power, and Peoples’ Counsel. Participants will learn more about the family policing system, family separation as a strategy across systems, and the support and care we must build to deepen our collective fight toward liberation.

Presenters: Ashley Albert (she/her), Abraham Paulos (he/him), Brittany Francis (she/her), Dessera Wright (she/her), Evelyn Alvarez (she/her), and Jasmine Sankofa (she/her)

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HANDS ON DEFENSE MODEL

Room C03

Hands on Defense is a model that provides legal advocacy to survivors of incarceration who have experienced discrimination and been denied public housing or housing vouchers because of CORI background screenings. At the appellate level, HOD not only provides a vital lifeline to survivors of incarceration, but also drives systemic change by addressing discriminatory policies and advocating for long-term, transformative reform.

It's crucial that public housing authorities and broader institutions become more aware of how their policies disproportionately affect marginalized communities, especially Black individuals. We spark ripples of positive change by empowering community-based organizations and survivors of incarceration, to educate public housing authorities about the harm and collateral consequences that separate Black families and destabilize our communities.

Presenters: Leslie Credle, Naia Wilson, and Jose Lorenzo

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ERASE THE DATABASE: ENDING GANGS POLICING

Room C05

This workshop will provide education on how gangs policing including the gangs database impacts NYC communities, strategies to end these practices and efforts abolish the database. The workshop will include an overview of the issues, as well as a discussion facilitated by youth facilitators with lived experience on the ways these practices cause harm to young people and their communities, strategies youth are using to build their own community safety, and advocacy efforts to abolish gangs policing.

Presenters: Julie Taylor, Obi Afriyie, Victor Dempsey, MK Kaishian, Youth Facilitators from Center for Justice Innovation

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THE NEW MASS INCARCERATION POPULATION: WOMEN AND GIRLS AND THEIR BABIES

Room C06

This workshop will bring an interactive discussion on the impact the Roe v. Wade turnover will have on incarceration of women and girls and trans-expansive populations in the U.S. making future women and girls the highest incarcerated population in this country, if not the world, for generations to come. Forty new prisons are being constructed. What can we do as a collective power to engage, educate, and activate what this means to the

target populations, build awareness and solution driven action as intervention, prevention, and reversal state by state.

Presenters: Sharon Turner and Tabatha Trammell

WORKSHOP BLOCK #2

3:45–5:00pm

COP NATION. INCARCERATION NATION. COMMON STRUGGLE AND RESISTANCE.

Room 311/312

Designed to be a participatory conversation during which attendees will engage in an effort to (1) build common understanding and solidarity, (2) share strategies, victories, lessons, and (3) thought partner around collective resistance to the police and carceral state.

Presenters: Movement for Black Lives - Mary Hooks, Mshairi Siyanda, Liyah Brown, Esq.

THE MOURNING AFTER: USING COLLECTIVE GRIEF AND LOSS TO FUEL COLLECTIVE ACTION

Room 301

Core organizers of Mourning Our Losses (MOL), a crowd-sourced memorial space honoring the lives of those killed by mass incarceration, will co-facilitate this workshop. We'll take a conversational approach in discussing how we bonded as we built MOL's horizontal operation during one of our nation's most terrible periods of grief and uncertainty – Covid-19 in prison. We'll talk about how the experience supporting each other, peers on both sides of the walls, and working through shared trauma led each of us to the critical work we continue to do in our local communities. The workshop's main goal is to share MOL's story and connect with others for future collaborations on archival and advocacy work. We'll share bits of our collective and individual journeys in order to illustrate how surviving and strategizing together through severely dark times can lay a solid, trusted foundation for sustainable organizing and collective action in the future.

Presenters: Page Dukes, Luci Harrell, Adamu Chan, Kirsten Pickering, Michelle Daniel Jones

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OUT OF THE JAIL AND INTO THE CAPITOL: A GRASSROOTS EFFORT TO PROMOTE SAFETY AND DIGNITY BEHIND BARS

Room 302

Recently, the public was horrified by the brutal beating death of Robert Brooks, who was incarcerated at New York's Marcy Correctional Facility. This incident was met with outrage, culminating in rallies, demands for justice, and criminal investigations. Tragically, incidents such as this are not isolated, something that Social Workers & Allies Against Solitary Confinement ("SWASC") seeks to address through their NY state bill – the "Detention Facility Healthcare Privacy and Protection Act."

In this workshop, leaders of SWASC's legislative team will introduce this legislation, which would require anyone inside a correctional facility to report improper treatment of an incarcerated individual, thus providing a blueprint for change. A panel, composed of formerly incarcerated individuals and healthcare professionals with experience in correctional settings, will discuss the necessity of policy change and provide participants with the tools to get involved. After horrific events such as Brooks' death, community members and citizens often feel powerless, but this workshop will show how legislative advocacy can transform powerlessness into collective action.

Presenters: Mary Buser, Nicole Capozziello, Nathaniel Evans, Justyna Rzewinski, Marvin Wade

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UP TO US: SEX ED FILMS BY AND FOR JUSTICE SYSTEM-IMPACTED YOUTH

Room 304

Up to Us is a series of three fictional 10-minute films, written by young people who have been impacted by the justice system. The films are accompanied by interactive arts-based workshops facilitated by trained sexual health educators. The goal of this workshop is to demonstrate how entertainment-education (EE) can build empathy, combat stigma, and provide access to sexual health education to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth.

Up to Us follows six characters through their lives in Los Angeles as they navigate sexual health decision-making and various relationships. The program is centered around three topics: 1) identity and gender stereotypes, 2) contraceptive use and STI testing, and 3) consent. Up to Us aims to provide culturally relevant sexual health education using the entertainment-education methodology (Sabido, 1967), which disseminates health information through relatable characters and

emotionally engaging storylines to encourage behavior and attitude changes.

Presenters: Jai Williams and Rosie Rios

BEAUTY BEYOND BARS: RECLAIMING IDENTITY AMIDST INCARCERATION

Room 305

This workshop will highlight the advocacy of Beauty Beyond Bars (BBB), a nonprofit empowering incarcerated people with beauty and hygiene through donation drives, awareness campaigns, and legislative advocacy. BBB will share its donation initiatives and testimonies from clients on the transformative role of beauty in reclaiming identity behind bars. Facilitators will lead a structured conversation, encouraging participants to reflect on their definitions of and experiences with beauty. Participants will also learn about BBB's sponsorship of the Culturally Competent Hair Care Act (AB-1875), a bill that mandates curl creams and gels be made available to incarcerated people in California. The workshop will teach participants the skills necessary to write, sponsor, and lobby for criminal justice reform legislation. Participants will walk away with a toolbox for legislative advocacy and enthusiasm to join the movement for beauty behind and beyond bars.

Presenters: Lea Nepomuceno and Keya Solomon

FREEDOM TO BREATHE: RESTORATIVE BREATHWORK FOR REBUILDING STRENGTH AND CALM

Room 404

This workshop is designed to help formerly incarcerated individuals reconnect with their breath as a tool for healing, self-regulation, and stress relief. Participants will explore techniques to release tension, manage anxiety, and cultivate a sense of inner peace and empowerment. Through guided exercises and group reflection, the workshop creates a safe space to build resilience and embrace the present moment.

Presenters: Abbe Marten, Sydney Pentland, and Baylen Parada

TRANSITIONING FROM STUDENT TO LEADERSHIP: INSIGHTS AND CHALLENGES NAVIGATING HIGHER EDUCATION FT UNDERGROUND SCHOLARS PROGRAMS

Room 405

The Underground Scholars program in the University of California (UC) system creates a pathway for incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and system impacted individuals

into higher education. In this workshop, members of these programs will explore the journey to their current roles, providing insights into how they arrived at their positions in higher education. They will also discuss the key policies that support students within the UC system and the essential work they are doing to further those efforts. The session will address the challenges of working within the UC system, including institutional obstacles and staffing issues, and how these impact the work and students. The last 15 minutes will be dedicated to a Q&A session, allowing participants to engage directly. This will be a valuable opportunity for attendees to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in higher education within the UC framework.

Presenters: Melissa Ortiz, Peter Huk, Majid Mohammad, Maritza Lopez, Diana Greer, Hector Cervantes, & Shawn Khalifa

THE STRUGGLE OF PREGNANCY BEHIND BARS

Room 406

This workshop will address the current situation for incarcerated pregnant and birthing people in most correctional facilities, and New Hour's launch of the Compassion and Reproductive Equity (CARE) Act campaign as a response to the devastating treatment of pregnant and birthing people behind bars. The workshop will also address the critical need to keep parents/infants together, as well as ways to protect in-person visits for children who are separated from their parents. In the past 5 years, Osborne Association has been spearheading a campaign to protect in-person visitation and other practices that support and maintain family bonding. This workshop will provide an opportunity to better understand organizing efforts on Long Island, NYC and Westchester County and encourage people to become a part of New Hour's CARE Coalition and Osborne's Youth Action Council.

Presenters: Serena Martin, Amanda Acevedo, Caroline Hansen, Tanya Krupat, Chanel Jones, Jamila Small

DEMISTIFYING CIVIL LITIGATION: PRESERVING YOUR RIGHT TO PURSUE A DAMAGES LAWSUIT

Room C06

In this workshop, participants will learn about pursuing civil litigation on behalf of presently and formerly incarcerated victims of medical neglect, sexual assault, and/or personal injury. Pursuing legal action against the institutions may feel like a daunting process, but with the right tools and legal support, civil litigation can become a mechanism for holding facilities accountable for their wrongdoing. However, complicated restrictions that must be met prior to filing

lawsuits can put claims at risk of being left behind and expiring, disproportionately impacting underrepresented communities.

This interactive workshop will provide an overview of different requirements that individuals must meet to preserve claims against City, County, State, or Federal entities. The workshop will also address barriers placed on litigation by the Prison Litigation Reform Act. By the end of the workshop, you will have drafted your own sample claim which can be used as guidance in the future!

Presenters: Jaehyun Oh, Esq. and Hardeep Shergill, Esq.

SANKOFA STORIES: HARNESSING NARRATIVE DESIGN TO TRANSFORM PRETRIAL JUSTICE

Room C05

Rooted in the conference's theme of "Sankofa," we will look at our personal histories and stories and also, back at the histories and stories often left behind in the struggle for justice and retrieve them to envision and build a more equitable pretrial system. By leveraging the art of storytelling, this session will provide attendees with actionable strategies to reshape public understanding and foster systemic change.

The workshop will focus on how storytelling can:

1. Highlight the human cost of pretrial incarceration and the broader impact on families and communities.
2. Challenge existing carceral narratives around safety and accountability.
3. Inspire and equip participants to create and share stories that promote restorative and non-carceral approaches to justice.

Presenters: Dr. Kevin Beckford and Kiki Dunston

BEYOND BARS, BEYOND RESILIENCE: CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR THE CARCERAL POPULATION

Room C06

Climate change has become one of the most pervasive global issues that affects every aspect of our lives. Carceral populations are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due systemic inequities and environmental risks. The goal of this workshop is to explore the implications of climate change for incarcerated individuals. The workshop will discuss issues such as heat exposure, water contamination, flooding, poor air quality, and infrastructural conditions. As a vulnerable population with limited capacity to adapt, incarcerated individuals are disproportionately affected by climate-related challenges and are often overlooked in broader climate justice efforts. Participants in this workshop will engage in discussions to better understand these issues and collaborate on actionable strategies to address

these injustices, advocating for climate resilience within the carceral system.

Presenters: Gale Muhammad, Sydnie Bogan, Ashley Castro

FILM SCREENING & TALKBACK: TIME II: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5:30–7:30pm

Room 311/312

Join us for a film screening of the documentary *Time II: Unfinished Business* and a talkback with Fox and Rob Rich.

In this touching next chapter of their saga, Sibil Fox and Robert Richardson, the notable couple from the Oscar-nominated film *TIME* (2020), return to the battleground of Louisiana’s carceral state to fight for the release of their nephew and co-defendant from the clutches of a merciless system and ultimately discover that the purpose of freedom is to free others.

SUNDAY MARCH 9TH

Plenary and Workshops

MORNING PLENARY

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FORWARD EVER: YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE (10:00AM-11:30AM)

Room 311 / 312 (Overflow on the Concourse Level)

Panelists:

Elianny Innocent, The Osborne Association

Keishon Groves

Selah Blue, H.O.L.L.A.

Angelique Williams, The Children's Defense Fund

Moderator: Jarrell Daniels, the Center for Justice at Columbia University

WORKSHOP BLOCK #1

11:45am-1:00pm

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FROM ATTICA TO MARCY: IT'S TIME FOR ABOLITION

Room 311/312

This workshop examines the implications for incarcerated people of the rising right-wing political climate, as exemplified by Project 2025. Using the tragic murder of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility in December '24 as a focal point, it explores the potential role of right-wing policies and initiatives on prison culture and state-propagated violence. Similar to the right-wing agenda in existence in 1971 when the Attica rebellion and massacre took place, the current climate foretells misery and terror for incarcerated people. The session also highlights how agencies like the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and the union, New York State Correction Officers and Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA), frame incidents like Brooks' murder as isolated events, distracting from the pervasive violent culture in the system. The recent illegal wildcat strike by thousands of prison guards will be examined in this context. The workshop will raise awareness and foster advocacy for greater accountability and elimination of the prison system as we know it.

Presenters: Michelle King and Lumumba Bandele

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SELF-DEFENSE AND COMMUNITY CARE: EQUIPPING OURSELVES TO PROTECT AND CARE FOR EACH OTHER

Room 301

Self-care and self-defense, community care and community defense, are all part of how we keep ourselves and each other safe! What could it look like to build and deepen our care and safety practices from places of joy and empowerment that work with our bodies, minds, and hearts? This 2-part workshop will include an introduction to foundational self-defense tools and techniques, taught by community organizers trained in Jiu Jitsu, Tae Kwon Do, Okinawan Kenpo, and other martial arts; and a group exploration of how to co-create similar spaces across communities using tools like pod mapping and radically imagining how we can build beloved community. We will discuss how this more welcoming, casual approach that centers bodily autonomy, consent, and the experiences of queer, femme, trans, non-binary, etc, organizers allows for a broader understanding of the goal of self-defense that isn't rooted in individualism or defending capitalists' interests, and does not utilize the cops or other oppressive systems.

Presenters: Gabriel Hatuey Quiñones Reinat & Anees Hasnain

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RECLAIMING MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED COLLEGE STUDENTS

Room 302

This workshop focuses on the vital role mental health plays in the success of formerly incarcerated college students. Drawing on the concept of Sankofa—looking back to recover what may have been lost—we'll delve into the unique challenges these students face, from overcoming stigma and past trauma to managing academics alongside other responsibilities. Together, we'll explore how mental health can support personal and academic growth, sharing real-life examples, open dialogue, and actionable strategies. Participants will leave with tools to build resilience, practice self-care, and foster supportive communities. Designed to inspire reflection and connection, this session invites students, educators, and allies to create environments where healing and progress go hand in hand. Whether you're navigating your own challenges or supporting someone else's journey, this workshop offers insights and resources to help you move forward with strength and purpose.

Presenter: Shakil Chaudhry

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EXPLORING THE ART OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: ARTIVISM & PHOTOVOICE AS PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH METHODS

Room 304

Art has traditionally been used as the bridge and mediator between our subjective experience and objective reality. Utilizing the participatory methods of activism and photovoice, this workshop will provide a framework for marginalized communities to shape and process their experiences as a catalyst for change and restorative justice. With special consideration to youth needs, this workshop addresses the gap of young adolescents trying to find a way in society and learning how to cope with an ever-changing environment affected by the prison industrial complex, stress, intersectionality, and LGBTQ+ identity/discourse.

Presenters: Nalo Turner (they/he) and Tova Marshall (she/her)

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SECURING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Room 305

The Criminal Legal Reform movement—particularly around women, girls, and gender-expansive people has witnessed many transitions in funding opportunities. The already underfunded issue area has suffered a drastic decline in the interest of funders.

This will be an advanced workshop on the current funding landscape, tools & tactics in securing funding, prospect research, relationship building & management, defining organizational strategies through the fundraising lens, and using our voices to partner with philanthropy in ways that transform their process and how they do their work.

We will be recognizing the issues that are transgressing at the Federal & Local levels that impact funding streams, but we will be talking intentionally about private funding.

Presenters: Dominique-Laura Pierce

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MAKING SOCIAL IMPACT THROUGH HEALING AND COLLABORATIVE WORK WITHIN AND BEYOND THE WALLS

Room 404

This workshop takes a gendered approach to looking back and forward in the pursuit of justice. Over the past fifty years, there's been a distressing surge in incarceration and systemic marginalization of women in the criminal justice system. The next 50 years require championing groundbreaking solutions,

powerful partnerships, and transformative advocacy to address the unique challenges faced by justice-involved women and nonbinary individuals. This session will feature bold and innovative initiatives led by currently and formerly incarcerated women that align the power of research, education, policy, and lived experience to catalyze a lasting, gender-just criminal justice system. This session is also intended to promote healing and inspire people to make a greater social impact on their communities.

Presenters: Erica King, Darlene George, Keilah Joyner, Pam Neely, Ruby Welch

LET HER GO: THE FIGHT TO DECARCERATE WOMEN AT RIKERS ISLAND

Room 405

Through a mix of discussion, interactive simulations and action planning, this workshop will illustrate how to collaborate effectively across roles and disciplines to design alternatives to pretrial detention for women that are holistic, trauma-informed, and gender-responsive. Whether you are new to the issue or actively engaged, this session offers tools, inspiration, and actionable steps to contribute to the fight to end the incarceration of women.

Presenters: Kate McMahon, Sasha Fisher, Esq., Sarah Zarba, LMSW, Tara Ramos-McManus, LMSW, Megan Estrada, Terra Brockman, Esq.

BRIDGING THE GAP: CREATIVE ADVOCACY FOR REENTRY AND COMMUNITY HEALING

Room 406

This workshop explores the systemic factors that push Black women and girls into carceral systems and highlights the transformative potential of trauma-responsive care in supporting reentry and community healing. Grounded in the lens of Sankofa, it reflects on historical oppression and its impact on present systems while focusing on actionable strategies for advocacy and liberation. Drawing from direct work with incarcerated women and reentry programs, this session provides practical tools to bridge gaps in care, foster healing, and amplify advocacy efforts. Participants will engage in reflective exercises and group discussions to explore their roles in building equitable systems of support, leaving with actionable strategies to connect personal healing with systemic change and collective liberation.

Presenter: Jacqui Johnson, LPC, ATR-BC

PROJECT RESTORE BED-STUY: FROM RIVALS TO COLLABORATORS

Room C03

Project Restore Bed-Stuy (PRB) was a 12-month community based gang-violence intervention program, supporting 30 young men connected to rival street crews in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn, who were impacted by cyclical and retaliatory gun violence. Participants were provided with the opportunity to transform their lives through increasing their personal and professional skills, addressing deep rooted personal trauma, and developing a commitment to community safety and peaceful coexistence. This workshop will review the final evaluation of the program, its scalable potential, and provide participants with a blueprint for similar programs. We will also facilitate discussion on how violence prevention is best achieved through addressing barriers to personal growth, including economic insecurity, disconnection from education, employment, and role models, and unhealed trauma.

Presenters: Jason Bostic, Wesley Jeffreys, Jonathan Arroyo, Tahari Spencer, Daryus Bryant, and other participants of PRB

NAVIGATING THE NOW: STRATEGIC RAPID RESPONSE

Room C05

In today's fast-changing landscape, organizations must act swiftly in crises. This workshop, led by Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP), equips participants with essential tools to develop strong rapid response plans. RAPP, a grassroots campaign led by formerly incarcerated people, fights to end mass incarceration by advocating for parole, clemency, and the release of aging and long-term incarcerated individuals. Through interactive exercises and real-world scenarios, attendees will learn to assess risks, allocate resources, and use strategic communication and organizing to stay agile and impactful in times of crisis.

Presenters: Jose Saldana, Lisette Nieves, TeAna Taylor, Elmer Flores

STRONGER TOGETHER: THE NECESSITY OF ATTORNEY & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING COLLABORATION IN THE WAKE OF PROJECT 2025

Room C06

Justice for those impacted by the criminal legal systems cannot be accomplished solely by trial & litigation. Those who are innocent, on death rows across the country, and languishing under extreme prison sentences need collaborative efforts

of effective litigation strategies and community organizing & advocacy efforts to reach holistic justice. Organizers whose work focused in the South will discuss the deltas and pluses of these collaborations and how we all can work in symbiotic ways towards justice, particularly in anticipation of Project 2025.

Presenters: ML Smith, Furonda Brasfield, Cherrell Brown, Tiara Cooper

SUNDAY WORKSHOP BLOCK #2

2:15pm–3:30pm

ABOLITIONIST ORGANIZING UNDER AUTHORITARIANISM

Room 311/312

Please note: Masks will be required to attend this workshop

A number of organizations, formations, coalitions, and strategic thinkers have put forth frameworks for resistance to rising authoritarianism, fascism, white cisheteropatriarchal supremacy, and imperialism in the U.S. in this moment. Recognizing that criminalization is instrumental and essential to the imposition of authoritarian regimes and Right-wing agendas, facilitators Andrea J. Ritchie and Mariame Kaba of Interrupting Criminalization will be sharing and workshoping a strategic approach for situating abolitionist organizing within these broader frameworks in the current context, and expanding them to create, recognize, and seize opportunities to advance abolitionist visions for liberatory futures rooted in transformative justice.

This will be a working session in which organizers will name current contradictions for abolitionist organizers and identify and refine how their organizing campaigns and priorities can be woven together into effective, broad-based, cross-movement strategies that not only push back against the tide of fascism but offer and enact visions for abundant communities and futures free of violence. Bring your thinking and strategizing caps!

Presenters: Andrea J. Ritchie and Mariame Kaba

FROM HARM TO HEALING: ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Room 301

Traditional responses to intimate partner violence (IPV) often focus on supporting survivors but fail to address those causing

harm, allowing the cycle of violence to continue, especially in communities impacted by gun violence. RISE, a city-wide initiative, seeks to expand IPV responses by addressing its intersection with gun violence, as both often co-occur in the same communities. Through behavior change programs and accountability interventions, RISE engages individuals responsible for harm, while maintaining a strong commitment to survivor-centered care. This approach offers compassionate alternatives to traditional systems. In this workshop, we will explore how RISE works to reduce violence by engaging both survivors and those causing harm, fostering lasting change, and promoting community accountability. By including those who cause harm in our violence reduction efforts, we aim to build safer, more resilient communities through a comprehensive, restorative approach.

Presenters: Al-Tabar Hudgins, Gabriel Hatuey Quiñones-Reinat, Julian Arzu

ADVOCACY AND ABOLITION FOR BEGINNERS

Room 302

This skill-share session is a space for collective learning, where participants come together to explore how to support people who are currently or formerly incarcerated and to begin the journey toward abolitionist practices. Together, we will exchange ideas, resources, and strategies for advocacy, including how to navigate carceral systems, amplify impacted voices, and build sustainable community support networks. Through guided discussions, activities, and shared experiences, we'll also examine the foundational principles of abolition, unpack myths, and reflect on the ways we can all contribute to creating a world without prisons or punitive systems. This workshop is designed to empower participants to reflect, learn, and grow together, with the goal of turning knowledge into action. Whether you're new to these ideas or looking to deepen your understanding, this session is for anyone ready to engage in a transformative conversation about justice and liberation.

Presenters: Ahkia Veshay and Vichelle Sanders

SEE ME: REFRAMING OUR STORIES

Room 304

We will be writing and then, if we choose, telling the group a story about ourselves, focusing on: 1) one unhelpful way that we have been described by others; 2) how we would have rather been described more accurately; 3) something or someone who has contributed the most to our becoming the person we

are now; and 4) how we would like to bring the story of how we have evolved over time to a larger public. The goal is to affirm the journey we've taken to become our current selves. Sharing personal stories with compassion for our struggles and affirmation of obstacles we've overcome is an important part of healing. It is crucial to eventually bring such stories to a larger public—to educate others and counter secondhand, politically-motivated, often sensationalist and generalized accounts that other people have fabricated (e.g., tales of immigrants eating their pets). Given the new administration's propensity to vilify whole groups of people, hearing directly from people in circumstances that many people have not experienced, like incarceration, is vital. The workshop will also provide the experience of a supportive community context.

Presenters: Jan Cohen-Cruz and Haja Worley

JUSTICE AT THE GATE: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SYSTEM-IMPACTED WOMEN

Room 305

This workshop highlights the barriers faced by justice-impacted women during reentry and offers transformative strategies for navigating systemic challenges. As the founder of Meet Her at the Gate, I bring lived experience and professional expertise to this conversation. Facilitated alongside Nafeesah A. Goldsmith, Community Outreach Specialist for the New Jersey Department of Correction, and a powerhouse advocate and leader in the movement, the workshop provides a multifaceted approach to addressing trauma, housing barriers, and equity. Attendees will explore trauma-informed reentry planning, innovative approaches to address barriers, and strategies for building community partnerships. Through storytelling, hands-on activities, and role-playing, participants will leave equipped with tools to foster empowerment and sustainable reentry solutions. The workshop centers on creating equity for women navigating reentry while elevating their voices and building pathways for long-term success.

Presenters: Cass Severe and Nafeesah A. Goldsmith

FIGHTING FOR A SECOND LOOK INSIDE AND OUT

Room C03

This spring, New York state will be considering the Second Look Act, which would allow judges to review and reconsider excessive sentences for individuals incarcerated for ten or more years. This workshop will discuss the ways in which currently and formerly incarcerated individuals are leading the fight

for a Second Look, strategies for organizing that foreground incarcerated voices, and consider how our experiences can be leveraged (and too often misused) in service of social and political change without prisons or punitive systems. This workshop is designed to empower participants to reflect, learn, and grow together, with the goal of turning knowledge into action. Whether you're new to these ideas or looking to deepen your understanding, this session is for anyone ready to engage in a transformative conversation about justice and liberation.

Presenters: Mujahideen Muhammad, Noah Remnick, Wilfredo Laracuente, Terel Overton, Penelope Martin, and Thomas Gant

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PARTICIPATORY DEFENSE: HELPING OUR LOVED ONES

Room C05

Participatory Defense (PD) is a community and family led model that helps people facing the criminal injustice system navigate through the court system to get the best outcome. PD is a community organizing model that empowers people facing charges, their families, and entire communities to shape legal outcomes and transform the landscape of power in the court system. We continue to search for new ways to support and uplift our community. Today Participatory Defense is active in over 40 cities across the country. Its methods stand out for the unique way they address challenges within the criminal justice system. PD is applied at every stage, from the moment of arrest to post-conviction proceedings. Moreover, it extends beyond criminal cases to include support in various courts—housing, family, district, and even Supreme Court cases. By handling individual cases together, communities can build strength, share knowledge, and collectively advance the movement for justice. This training will assist you with the tools needed to help others.

Presenters: Justine “Taz” Moore, Virginia Douglas, Brandi Peterson

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FIGHTING FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

Room C06

This workshop will introduce two powerful, state-wide grassroots campaigns for Youth Justice in New York that are underway. The Children’s Early Access to Counsel Bill / #Right2RemainSilent campaign is pushing for a new law that would protect youth under 18 by ensuring they receive nonwaivable consultation with an attorney before police questioning, preventing involuntary waivers and false confessions. This bill emerged from past injustices, including the experiences of the Exonerated Five, reinforcing the importance of learning from history to inform future action. The Youth Justice & Opportunities Act campaign

is advancing bold legislation to expand protections for adolescents and young adults through age 25 by increasing alternatives to criminal conviction and prison sentencing by investing in community based supports. The workshop's primary goal is to educate participants about the campaigns as well as the conditions, lived experiences and research that underpin these grassroots campaigns.

Presenters: José Pérez, Aaliyah Guillory-Nicken, Chloë LeStage

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