

# JOURNAL

WE COULD GIVE OUR ENTIRE LIVES OVER TO HEALING SEXUAL TRAUMA WOUNDS AND FACILITATING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE, BUT THEN WE WOULD ALSO MISS OUT ON THE DELICIOUS PARTS OF LIFE THAT RECOVERY OFFERS US. OVERBURDENING YOURSELF WITH ORGANIZING AND TAKING ACTION CAN BE A WAY OF JUSTIFYING REMAINING IN A HYPERVIGILANT STATE. IT'S ALSO A GREAT WAY TO EXPERIENCE BURNOUT. IT MAY FEEL LIKE IT SOME DAYS, BUT YOU WON'T BE THE ONLY ONE WORKING TOWARD A SEXUALLY HEALTHY WORLD. IF YOU CAN TRUST OTHERS TO DO SOME OF THE WORK, YOU CAN DO YOURS WHILE MAINTAINING YOUR HEALTH. LET'S EXAMINE WHERE YOU'RE AT RIGHT NOW AND WHAT YOU MIGHT BE READY TO TAKE ON.

## IS IT SAFE FOR YOU TO TAKE ACTION?

Are you in crisis? Do you need to take precautions if your actions could provoke your assailant? Could you experience backlash that might mean displacement or income loss?

## WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH, TONE, DESIRED IMPACT?

There are times to express anger and outrage. There are times to lead with love and healing. There's everything in between. What feels like your sweet spot? What would you use that approach and tone to change?

## IS YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK ONBOARD?

Have you let your people know you're taking action? Have you checked in about their privacy concerns and needs?

## WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT COMMUNICATIONS COMFORT LEVEL?

You'll have to speak about sexual trauma with greater frequency. Do you have a sense of what you'd like to say? Should you think it through more and practice by yourself or with people in your circle before you go big?

## WHAT EMOTION IS DRIVING YOU MOST?

Are you angry? Are you hopeful? Are you determined? Is this the emotion you want to drive you? How will you strike the right balance and stay grounded in your intention?

## CAN YOU HANDLE REJECTION?

People will not respond or say no when you ask them to take action. They won't RSVP and attend an event you've given your heart to produce. They'll decline to donate when you need operating cash. When you're doing something so personal, can you find the grace to accept their decisions and forgive if they've injured you?

## IS IT MORE APPEALING TO JOIN AN EXISTING EFFORT OR DO YOU WANT TO START YOUR OWN?

It could minimize your stress and maximize your impact if you work with an established movement. It could be freeing and satisfying to take on something that you specifically see not being addressed the way it could be best done. What are the pros and cons for either option?

**TIP** Activism can demand a lot from you, and it won't always feel like you're making progress. Remember these things as you do the work, and build up your stamina.

- Study what's already been done and learn from it.
- Show respect for long-time organizers and gain perspective from them.
- If you're only familiar with how sexual trauma has impacted folks in your same demographic, train yourself to think about how it impacts others of different races, genders, incomes, backgrounds, countries.
- The book *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* by adrienne maree brown is an excellent source of information about how to architect healthy and effective movements.
- Sexual trauma activism doesn't happen in isolation. Directly and indirectly, it plays a role in all social movements.
- \* Sometimes passionate organizers who are furthering a cause near to their hearts choose to minimize the urgency of addressing sexual trauma.
- \* Bringing up concerns about sexual trauma might be viewed as distracting, undermining, or tangential to a prominent movement. Be prepared for pushback.
- \* When you provide input to movement leaders, make it a habit to integrate how addressing sexual trauma factors into the best strategy.