

Making Activism Sustainable

In a perfect world, engagement in activism is characterized by energy, hopefulness, involvement and efficacy. But, we don't live in a perfect world. Activism is hard. Change is slow. The work is important, and the stakes are high, so we often feel the pull to "do the work" every moment of every day. But if we are to sustain our engagement in this kind of work, we must cultivate an awareness of our own emotional state and needs. And we must also cultivate habits and strategies for self-care that can be responsive to our needs. When we do that, we remain engaged to fight the good fight another day.

CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE.

AUDRE LORDE



Burn-out is real and is characterized by frustration, cynicism, exhaustion, loss of motivation and enthusiasm.

The antidote to burn-out is self-care, stress management, connecting with hope (even when change is slow), and identifying places of control within our work and our lives.

A Few Self-Care Tips for Activists

- Self-care doesn't have to take a long time, but it is important to do regularly. Making sure to engage with activities that bring you pleasure and joy can help get you through difficult times.
- At least occasionally disengaging and "unplugging" from the constant stream of "news" can help maintain your energy so you can stay engaged for the long-term.
- Connecting with friends and others with similar experiences and values is validating and helps us re-energize.
- Connecting with nature can help you recharge and feel grounded.
- Play is an important part of self-care. Ben Franklin said, "Games lubricate the body and the mind."
- Spiritual practices can reduce stress, and help people live with a greater sense of gratefulness and trust in the unknown.