

HOW TO HOLD A MENTAL HEALTH AS RESISTANCE EVENT

Taking care of ourselves and our mental health is essential. It helps us manage the political chaos around us and builds the sustainability we need to continue fighting for our communities and families. Hosting a group event focused on mental wellness can help your community build resilience together.

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Partner with a Licensed Therapist

Start by identifying a trained clinical therapist who can co-lead the event. Ask your network—there may already be a licensed professional in your group. If not, the American Psychological Association offers tools to help you find one.

Choose a Supportive Setting

Select a private, comfortable space that encourages openness. People should feel safe to share without fear of being overheard.

Promote the Event

Create a signup form and share a compelling description. Here's a sample:

"The current state of the world is wearing on us—it's meant to. With support from [Therapist Name], this event will help us understand how our bodies and minds react to stress and offer tools to care for ourselves so we can continue the work. Learn practices for personal sustainability and how to focus on what we can control versus what we can't. Join us to restore and reenergize together."

HOLDING THE EVENT

Your clinical therapist will also likely have ideas, but here is a sample format you could follow:

1. Welcome & Opening Question (Group Leader)

Greet the group and invite each person to answer: "What is your 'why' for being here and being part of this movement?" This reflection helps the therapist connect and opens space for vulnerability.

2. Introduction & Framing (Group Leader)

Share the purpose of the event—why caring for our mental health is essential for long-term resistance. Offer a personal story of feeling either burnout or building your resilience. Introduce the therapist and set expectations for the session.

3. Main Program (Therapist-led)

May vary based on the therapist's style, but commonly includes:

- Finding Calm: Start with a guided body scan. Ask participants how their bodies are processing current stressors. Facilitate a discussion about recognizing triggers and moving through emotional cycles.
- Control vs. Chaos: Help the group identify what is within their control and let go of what isn't. Share strategies for staying informed without becoming overwhelmed. Encourage intentional media consumption and strong, grounding connections.
- Coping & Self-Care Discussion: Use pairs of contrasting feelings (e.g., certainty vs. uncertainty) to prompt conversation around strategies for balance and care.
- Role Determination: Discuss the importance of knowing your role in activism. Explore fears around doing hard things and letting go of what isn't yours to carry.
- Metta (Loving Kindness) Practice: Close with a mindfulness activity—wishing peace and healing for oneself, loved ones, and even those we struggle with.

4. Closing (Group Leader)

Reiterate how community support is key to sustaining these practices.

Encourage reflection on what participants are taking away. Share your group's upcoming actions or events.

CONSIDER SETTING THE TONE OF THE EVENT:

- Light snacks & drinks
- Soft background music
- Calming scents (diffuser or candle)
- Journals or handouts (optional)

