

Day 4 Friday
May 8th, 2026

Session 2: 11am-11:45am



MAY 5 - 8, 2026
MENTAL
HEALTH
ACTION WEEK

THE HOLDING SPACE:
METABOLIZING THE WEIGHT OF OUR WORK
DAY 4, FRIDAY MAY 8TH, 2026

MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



Leora Ya'Acova Wolf-Prusan, EdD
Managing Director, CARS

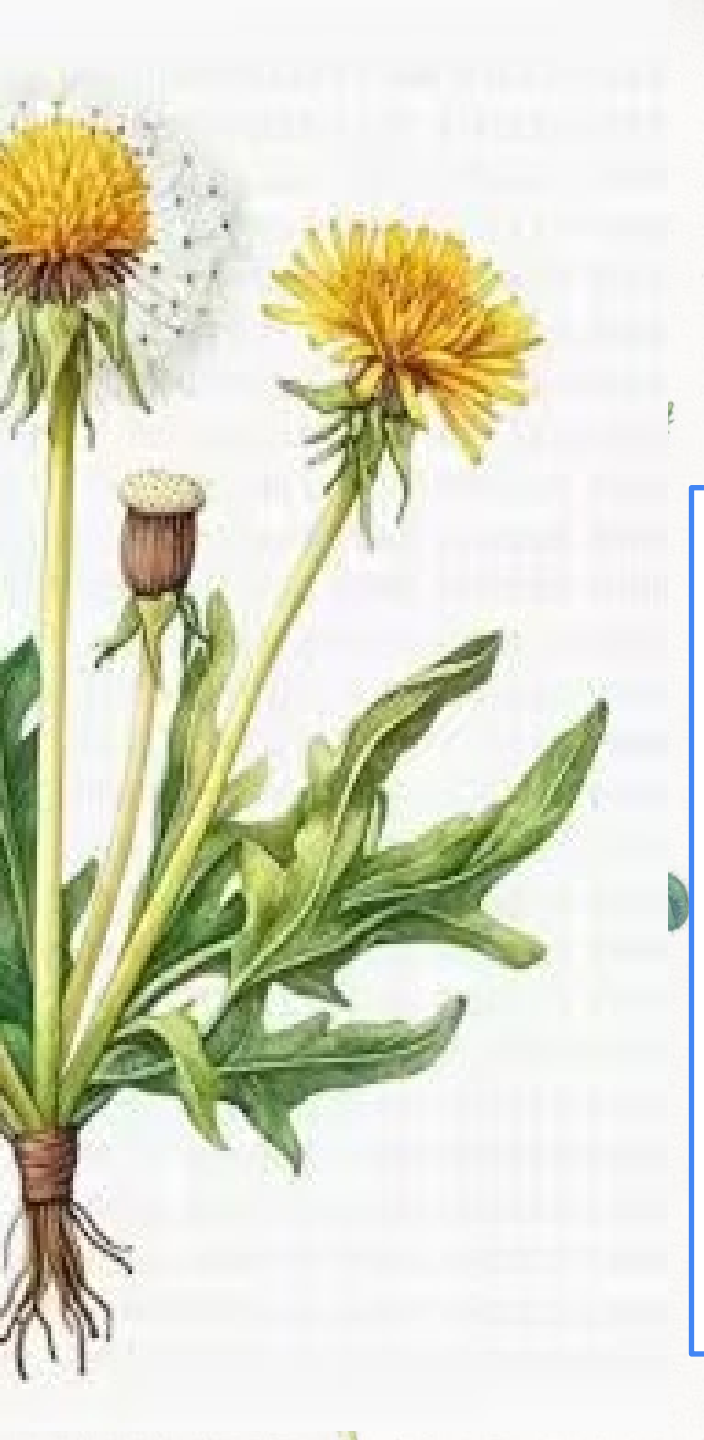


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2026 Mental Health Action Week

<https://www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org/e-series/2026-mental-health-action-week/>

Day 1 Tuesday May 5th	Day 2 Wednesday May 6th	Day 3 Thursday, May 7th	Day 4 – TODAY! Friday, May 8th
<i>Focus:</i> <i>The Sustained Self</i>	<i>Focus:</i> <i>New Directions in Student Mental Health</i>	<i>Focus:</i> <i>Systems & Services</i>	<i>Focus:</i> <i>Integration & Metabolization</i>
<i>Main Session:</i> <i>10:00 am – 11:00 am</i>	<i>Main Session:</i> <i>10:00 am – 11:00 am</i>	<i>Main Session:</i> <i>10:00 am – 11:00 am</i>	<i>Processing the week:</i> <i>10:00 am – 10:45 am</i>
<i>Breathwork Session:</i> <i>11:05 am – 11:15 am</i>	<i>Breathwork Session:</i> <i>11:05 am – 11:15 am</i>	<i>Breathwork Session:</i> <i>11:05 am – 11:15 am</i>	Processing our work: 11:00 am – 11:45am



GROUNDING OUR INQUIRY

What needs metabolizing, healing, or transformation ***inside me*** in order to sustain healing amongst my people?

What needs metabolizing, healing, or transformation ***inside us***—as a team, department, or organization—to stabilize and reimagine the way we care for one another?

Engaging in Deep Listening and Generative Conversation



Though **this should feel therapeutic**, this is not therapy



Respect one another's “**complex personhood**”



Being here is **participating**



Practice **contextual confidentiality**



There is **always enough time** for the right work



There is a conversation that only the people in this room right now can have. **Find It.**



ATTUNING TO THIS MOMENT



**The body has its own
story to tell if we are
willing to listen.**

*-Resmaa Menakem, My
Grandmother's Hands*

Grief work will be the next stage of healing activism.

In this period of intense systemic collapse, we are plunged into personal and collective grief as it shows up in a multitude of ways.

Grief shows up in tending to our loved ones who are at the end of life. It shows up as we witness ongoing genocides, ICE raids, and state-sanctioned violence. It shows up as we acknowledge the impact of ongoing ecological devastation, which increases species extinction, decreases biodiversity, and destroys the earth, air, and water that we all need to sustain life.

Grief initiates us into the tension of change, forcing us to figure out who we are in this shifting. It is the uncomfortable experience of not getting what we want. It is nonlinear, ambiguous, potent, and overwhelming.

Grieving is a tender, courageous, and sacred act because we acknowledge all aspects of this experience.

Our capacity to be with grief as a teacher and partner helps us show up for ourselves and for others during challenging times, as a friend, family member, neighbor, community caretaker, healer, activist, educator, and more.

-Lama Rod Owens



PAUSE AND REFLECT

How is grief impacting your capacity to care these days?

WE ARE RELATIONAL BEINGS



Interacting Layers of Trauma and Healing, RYSE (2017)

Inner circle: Individual & Interpersonal

2nd Circle: Community & Place

3rd Circle: Systems & Institutions

Outer Circle: History, Legacy, & Structure

Naming & acknowledging "vertical forms of violence" allows us to ask:

"How we might create spaces of safety and of healing in a school system and institution that has been historically unsafe for students [of color]?"

...
Center the voices on the margins that are living and grappling with grief and trauma and death every single day.

- shea martin



METABOLIZING THIS MOMENT



What if the way
we respond to
crisis **is part of**
the crisis?

- Bayo Akomolafe

WE BEGIN WHOLE, WE STRIVE FOR WHOLENESS

Safety: the sense of being physically, psychologically and emotionally secure.

Agency: the ability to make a decision, experience reasonable consequences of that decision and make a subsequent decision.

Dignity: the sense of one's place and power in the world. Self-worth.

Belonging: the expression of being connected, a full member of a group.



An individual's psychology can heal by finding the courses of action that match one's felt need— but there are no skipped steps.

Sitting with discomfort is always first, followed by connection and inspiration — but at the end of the day, we need action to metabolize grief and transform our material and cultural conditions.

Metabolized grief can power deep and lasting change infused with profound joy, while unmetabolized grief becomes an almost insurmountable barrier to it.

Grief Belongs in Social Movements. Can We Embrace It? (2021)

- Malkia Devich-Cyril

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From: Grief Belongs in Social Movements. Can We Embrace It?
- Malkia Devich-Cyril

Identify three-six words in a row that resonate with you.

1. What part of this quote is standing out to you—and what might that be revealing about what you are currently holding or trying to metabolize?
2. As you reflect on the idea that there are “no skipped steps,” what are you noticing in your thoughts, feelings, or questions about creating space to process it all?
3. What feels most challenging about moving through these steps—sitting with discomfort, building connection, and taking action?



**MOVING FROM ISOLATION TO
CONNECTION:**



**“To be human is to be
entangled.**

**Healing is not a solo journey,
nor is it an individual quest.**

**Healing is the work of coming
together in response to the
questions that have no
answers.”**

— Bayo Akomolafe

WHY WE NAME THE THINGS

- **Naming** helps us move from overwhelm to clarity.
- It makes the invisible **visible** — what's heavy, what's missing, what's alive.
- It allows us to honor what we're carrying and where we're hurting.
- Naming is a **practice of liberation**.
- It invites us to witness each other with **honesty and tenderness**.
- It creates space for truth-telling, connection, and collective care.
- It's the first step in imagining something different — and building it together.



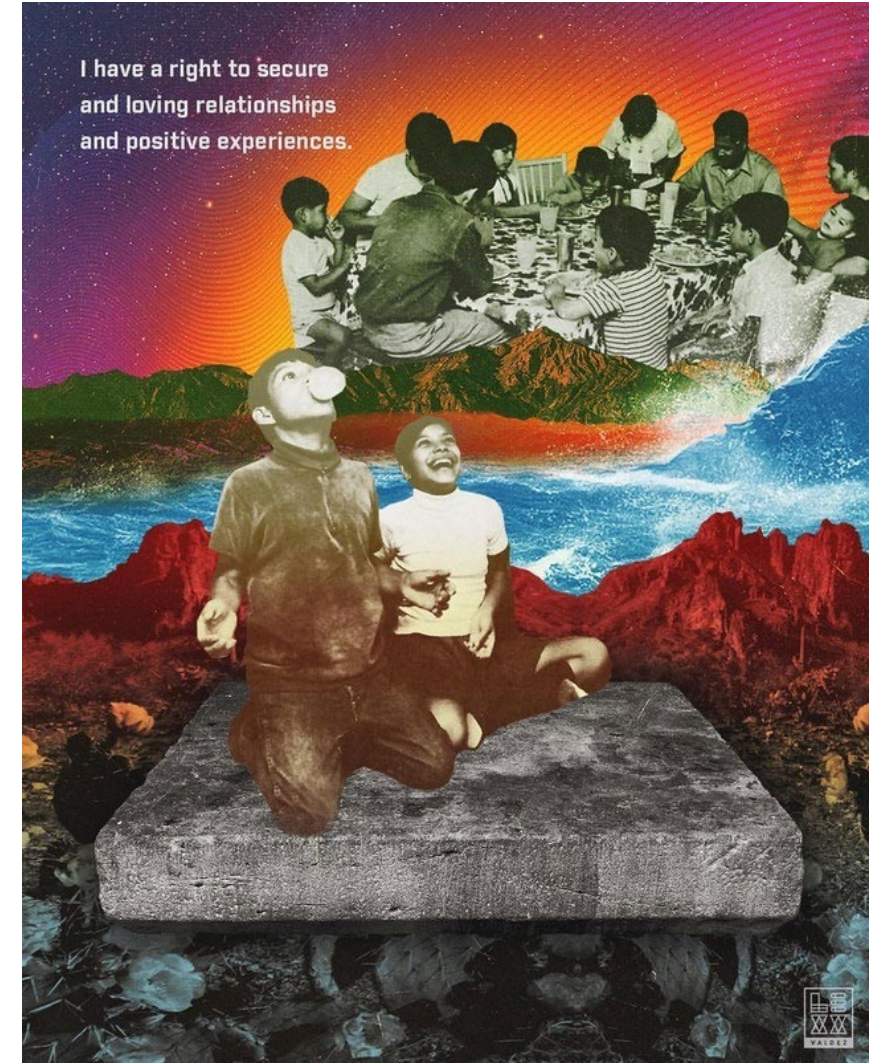
STRUCTURED WITNESSING PRACTICE

In small groups...

Identify a question on this list that you want to give voice to:

- Something I wish others understood about this moment is...
- Lately, I've been carrying...
- One thing that has helped me get through is...
- What I need more of right now is...
- I wish I could release...
- I am struggling to embrace...

I have a right to secure and loving relationships and positive experiences.





CLOSING REFLECTION AND PRACTICE



The heart that breaks
open can contain the
whole universe.

— Joanna Macy

All of my pain is a spider
I've learned not to crush
with the heel of my shoe
but to guide with a page
of my journal
into an empty glass
asking questions about its life,
its purpose, as I walk
careful out to the garden
and rest it down on the earth.
My pain, how happy it is
to leave me whenever
I treat it kind.

—ANDREA GIBSON

As We Close:

- **What shifts for you when you imagine treating your pain with gentleness instead of force?**
- What might "guiding it" — instead of "crushing it" — look like in your own life or practice?
- **What is one way you can support yourself in “guiding” rather than suppressing as you move through this moment?**



Our collective
aspirations for
wellness, safety.,
peaceful and ease.

METTA

You are a miracle walking
I greet you with wonder
In a world which works to own
Your joy and imagination
You have chosen to be free,
Every day, as a practice.

I can never know the struggles you
went through to get here,
But i know you have swum upstream
And at times it can be lonely

-adrienne marie brown



We'd love to hear from you. Please complete this short survey and let us know how we did.



https://bit.ly/Day4_ProcessingtheWork

What is Mental Health Action Week?

Statewide Purpose

- Established by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors to:
 - Strengthen trauma-informed practices across the system
 - Improve campus climate and culture
 - Reduce structural barriers to care
 - Advocate for expanded mental health resources for students and employees

Focus

- Designed for California Community College professionals — including faculty, staff, administrators, and mental health providers
- Focused on practical tools and system level strategies