


(Additional) Module 7: Looking after yourself

<p>Aim of the module</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand why it is important for campaigners to think about how to look after their own mental health (and that of fellow campaigners) • Have identified a number of steps they will take and that the group will take to look after their mental health and the mental health of the members of the group. 	 <p>Total time for the module: 2 hours 20 to 3 hours 15 (including a 15 min break)</p>
<p>Activity 1 Introduction</p>	<p>10 mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better understand why it is important for the group to have a conversation about looking after yourself, (self care and mental health)? 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <p>Ask the group why do they think we have included a session on looking after yourself, (self care, mental health and burn out)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build on this conversation to encourage the group to talk about how: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. as people who want to change the world for the better we often forget to look after ourselves b. many people believe the most effective way of transforming our society for the better is to make sure that we transform ourselves and part of that is about looking after ourselves and our mental health c. we will be most effective in trying to achieve our goal if we are looking after ourselves and each other 2. Possibly offer the group the following quote/s to stimulate discussion: <p><i>‘Caring for myself is not self indulgent it is self preservation and that is an act of political warfare’ Audre Lorde.</i></p> <p><i>‘I get less sleep, less rest and see my family less. It’s all pretty overwhelming sometimes. I get stressed and worry I’m not doing enough’ someone working on a campaign</i></p>	

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<h3>Activity 2: Mental health and campaigning, what is it?</h3>	<p>10 mins</p>
<h4>Aim of the session</h4> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand some of the symptoms of feeling ‘burn out’ and common mental health problems • Consider the impact of mental health upon our ability to function as campaigners 	
<h4>How to do it?</h4> <p>Ask the group to briefly list some of the symptoms of ‘burn-out’, write these down one side of a flip chart. (If the group is unfamiliar with the term ‘burn out’ it can be described as feeling mentally, physically and emotionally exhausted caused by prolonged stress. For a further discussion on the difference between stress and burnout see here).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some of these may include the following:;, not being able to sleep, forgetfulness, not being able to concentrate, fatigue, feeling anxious, feeling like you can’t be bothered and hopeless, not being able to get much done, feeling unmotivated, feeling detached, getting angry a lot, feeling detached etc. Consider adding these to the conversation. 2. Ask the group to list some of the symptoms of ‘common mental health problems’ (e.g. depression/anxiety) on the other side of the flip chart. 3. Ask the group if they notice anything about the two lists (i.e. there is a lot of overlap). Why is this important? Refer back to the first list of the symptoms of burn-out and pose the question ‘if you are experiencing these symptoms how will it affect your ability to do your campaigning work?’ 	
<h4>What stuff do I need?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip chart and markers 	

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<h3>Activity 3: Looking after ourselves</h3>	<p>50 mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect upon what self care actions might have worked for them in the past and their experience of what groups/organisations can do to make sure people’s mental health is prioritised. 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <p>Ask everybody to think (on their own) of a time when they have felt motivated and energised (it maybe worth trying to introduce the concept of sustainability at this point. i.e. a time when you felt sustained in your work). Ideally this should be when they were part of this group or team or another. If this isn’t possible then just think of another time in your life when this was the case. (2 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask people to go into pairs (they choose who they want to go with). To share their story. As part of your story explain why you felt motivated and energised and sustained. The other person in the pair has to ask questions to better understand what the person was doing that enabled them to feel motivated/energised/sustained? Each answer is written on separate pieces of A5 paper. The other person in the pair swaps and shares their story. (20 mins) 2. Everyone comes back together in one large group and shares what they came up with i.e. a list of things that keeps you energised, motivated and sustained. Slips of paper are stuck on the wall. Facilitator asks if the outputs can be arranged into any themes (on the wall), discuss these (15 mins) 3. During the discussion encourage the group to think about things that they have done as individuals and things that the group/team/organisation/unit they have been part of has done (these may become two of the overarching headings). These are all strategies of how we can make sure we look after ourselves and others (10 mins) 	
<p>What stuff do I need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A5 sheets of paper • blu tack • marker pens 	

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<h3>Activity 4: What shall we do to look after ourselves and each other?</h3>	<p>35 mins</p>
<h4>Aim of the session</h4> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have decided what actions they can take (both as individuals and as a group) to make sure mental health is prioritised. 	
<h4>How to do it?</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everybody goes into small groups (2 or 3) and looks at the list from the previous activity. Ask people to come up with one or two things that they would like to do more of to help them look after themselves. Explain that its often easier to build on things that you are already doing a bit rather than changing your whole behaviours, (sometimes those things are unattainable). Ask each person (in their small group) to think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a time when they felt they did manage to do that thing and how it made them feel. • Is it possible to do more of this thing, if so how? (15 mins) 2. If the person feels comfortable sharing these then these are written on A5 pieces of paper, otherwise the individual can record them any way they want to. 3. What do we need to do as an organisation to make sure we look after ourselves and each other? Ask the large group (or small groups) to reflect on this and write these down on the flip chart. Discuss how these things will be done. Share the resource sheet either during the conversation (as a stimulus if conversation is difficult) or after it has finished. (15 mins) 4. Encourage the group to add anything they have decided to do as a group to the Group Campaign Planner (in the box marked 'Taking care of yourself') and anything they may want to do for themselves to their own individual campaign planner (5 mins) 	

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Trainer tips

Additional resources which may be useful to use/refer to are stored in the [‘Extra Resources/activities’](#) doc

What stuff do I need?

Resource sheet: Looking after yourselves and others

- A5 pieces of paper
- Marker pens
- Blu tack
- Flip chart

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<h3>Activity 5: Breathing space</h3>	<p>5 mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have experienced belly breathing 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate to the group diaphragmatic/belly breathing, then take them through the following: 2. Get yourself in a comfortable position for example place your feet flat on the ground or if you'd rather lie down. 3. Close your eyes and place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. 4. Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand. Fill your lungs as much as you can. 5. Breathe out slowly with pursed lips, slowly allowing your belly to collapse towards your spine. 6. Do this 3 times 7. Explain that belly breathing is said to stimulate the vagus nerve, the longest nerve in the body which originates in the brain and passes through many major organs. It plays a big part in the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the 'rest and digest' part (opposite to the sympathetic nervous system which is 'fight or flight'). The PSNS can be activated by belly breathing. 	
<p>What stuff do I need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some lungs 	

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<h3>Optional Activity 1: Self Care Kits</h3>	<p>15 +mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better understand how to put together a self care kit • better understand the benefits of the self care kit as a tool for when you feel anxious and / or stressed 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <p>The purpose of a self care kit is a collection of resources/tools you can use when you feel anxious/stressed to help you to take time out and ground yourself. In this session people start to make their own kits and encouraged to add to it when they go home, or make a bigger version of it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Find a container, bag, box - anything you can put things into (you may want to bring some small bags with you to get people started off, e.g. 'organza bags' available cheap online) Add objects into the container that you find pleasing/calming/make you happy. Something that has positive meaning for you. The objects should relate to all of your 5 senses, so you should have a minimum of 5 things in your container - things like, pebbles, feathers, photos (e.g. family/pet/holiday/scene), chocolate, dried flowers, essential oil, rose water, sequins, facemask, book, phone number of someone you can call when in need, postcard, bubble mixture, positive affirmation - anything that gives you pleasure, relaxes you etc Keep a self care kit at home and add to it over the years to help build up your resource. It's also a good idea to have a small one to carry around with you, if you feel you need grounding when not at home. <p>Thanks go to Ishah Jawaid Campaign Bootcamp Everyday Activism trainer for this activity.</p>	
<p>What stuff do I need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some containers (enough for one per person) e.g. 'organza bags'. • Selection of objects related to 5 senses. Most of the suggested items you can buy from cheap shops like 99p shops etc or online (pebbles, shells from a beach/online. Flowers from a garden/park - you could dry these yourself or leave as they are. 	

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<h3>Optional Activity 2: Wellbeing river</h3>	<p>70 mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect upon what self care actions might have worked for them in the past and their experience of what groups/organisations can do to make sure people’s mental health is prioritised. • decided what action to take in the future (both individually and as a group) 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. people are asked to go into pairs (or can be done individually if preferred) and to imagine their lives as long winding rivers. Using the flip chart paper and marker pens participants are asked to draw a river to represent their lives or part of their lives. Their different experiences of mental health/wellbeing are represented through the river (using different river features e.g. rapids, calm water, etc). Explain we get change by building on things that did work as well as addressing things that didn’t, so look at times when things were going well as well as not well. Explain these are their own river diagrams they do with them what they want and that in 30 minutes time they will have a chance to share their rivers with the rest of the group – but they don’t have to do this if they don’t want to) (15 mins each river total 30 mins) 2. If appropriate, and if the group is a long established one, it may be worth asking some in the group (particularly anybody that appears uncomfortable with the idea of doing a personal wellbeing river) to do a river diagram for the wellbeing of the group. 3. Mark on the rivers (on post its), at the times when wellbeing/mental health was low, what helped you/what worked (green post its)? (15 mins) 4. Ask group members to think about what learning from their own rivers can they apply to what is happening now. Write on the A5 sheets things they would like to do personally and things they think the group should do to make sure they look after themselves and others in the group. (time permitting they could add these to the future stretch of the river) (10 mins) 5. A5 sheets are stuck on the wall and discussed as one large group. The group discusses which things they will do as a group to support the mental health of the group members. Share the resource sheet either during the conversation (as a stimulus if conversation is difficult) or after it has finished. (10 mins) 	

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<p>6. Encourage the group to add anything they have decided to do as a group to the Group Campaign Planner and anything they may want to do for themselves to their own individual campaign planner (5 mins)</p> <p>Clearly this is potentially a very difficult session for people. The trainer needs to feel sure (in conjunction with participants) that the activity is appropriate and that a system is in place to support anyone that finds the process difficult, challenging or overwhelming.</p>	
<p>Trainer tips</p>	
<p>What stuff do I need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flip charts stuck together ● Markers ● Pens ● Post its <p>Resource sheet: Looking after yourselves and others</p>	