

Principle 2: Integrating care into conversation spaces

Attention to care is an integral part of practicing the Feminist Principles of the Internet, since it **underpins our imagining of what a world where everyone experiences digital safety, health, and freedom of expression could look and feel like!** But what do we mean by care, and why should it be integrated into our conversation spaces?

The activists coming into your space do not leave their activism, emotions or daily lived experiences at the door when they enter. Instead, they bring with them worlds of past traumas and stories about their relationships with their movements. As a feminist space, your event must **give room for moments of rest and healing**, knowing that your participants may be struggling with burn out and other mental, emotional and physical challenges.

Secondly, integrating care into your local conversation is **a means of sustaining the wellbeing of your networks and movements**. It can strengthen solidarity and sustain the energy of those who are in need of support. Caring for ourselves and one another in the spaces we hold is an act of resistance in and of itself against the systems that rely on our dis-ease and lack of wellbeing to thrive. Collective care is a political act!

Ways of integrating care into conversation spaces

Care practices can be integrated into your event in a number of ways! Here are a few:

- Regular breaks: all the parts of us need rest! Ensure to include various moments throughout your event for participants to take a break from discussions, have a snack, make tea or coffee, go to the bathroom, have a cigarette or get some fresh air.
- Hydration and snacks: make sure your participants have access to plenty of water to stay hydrated during the conversation, as well as some snacks to stay energised. If your event is a full day, try to ensure that participants get at least one good meal in the time they are attending too.
- Icebreakers and energiser activities: these are essential for enhancing the comfortability of participants, creating explicit space for fun, and getting participants to engage their bodies. Hold an energiser activity at the start of the event and at the start of each new session, especially after breaks, to sustain and replenish energy levels in the room.

[Here are some icebreakers and energiser activities!](#)

Conversations or sessions about care

If your event is over a full day or longer, and you would like to prioritise collective care as a key topic or feature in your agenda, **care activities can be entire sessions on their own!** You can consider:

- Engaging in self-care activities together
- Holding a conversation about care

Some self-care activities that you can do either individually, in groups, or collectively with all participants can include:

- **Stretch:** lead a stretching routine with participants.
- **Sitting meditation:** with a partner, or on their own, participants can find a spot to meditate, using the breath as an anchor by inhaling to gather your attention and exhaling to drop into your body.
- **Mindful walks:** if the location of the event allows, participants can go for a mindful walk in nature. Encourage participants to engage all their senses as they look, hear, smell and feel the natural scenery.
- **Journal:** give your participants a few minutes to do some personal journaling or a free writing exercise.
- **Share collective strategies of organisational care:** brainstorm together different ways in which care can be incorporated into organisational policy and practice.
- **Music:** Listening to music together can set the tone of a space and bring people into the same vibration or energy level. Have a playlist on-hand for different moments during the event.
- **Dance!** Dancing together helps us feel energised! This is a great practice to introduce after participants have been sitting for a long time, or when coming back after a lunch break to re-engage the body.

You may want to have a conversation about **care in your movement**, and brainstorm ideas about how to practice care both individually and collectively. Use the following questions to spark conversation and **learn from the experiences, politics and practices of others in the room:**

- What do you understand as self-care?
- What resistances do you have, if any, to self-care?
- How do you understand self-care as linked to collective care?
- Do you have any practices or rituals you consider to be self-care? What are they?
- How can we, as activists, remind ourselves to act in a self-caring way without feeling guilt, shame or privileged?

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