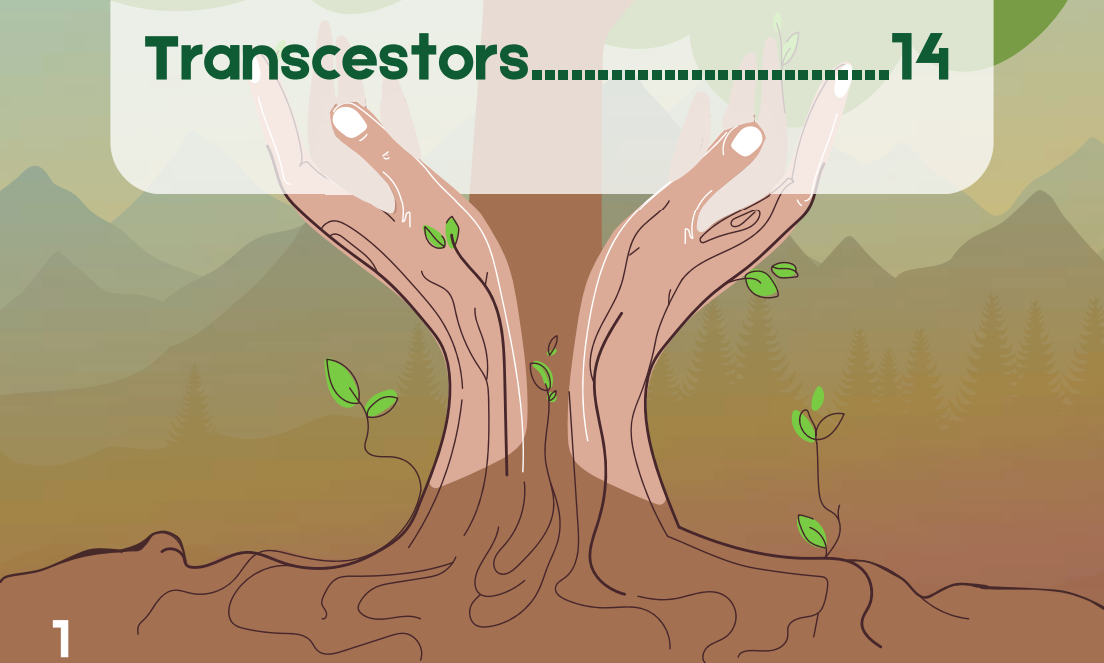




WATER
* THE *
ROOTS

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Welcome Letter



The Water The Roots zine is about the courageous voices of Black trans elders and Black trans youth creating space and intergenerational dialogue about sustainability. We acknowledge our Trancestors who walked before us on this journey and we acknowledge ourselves as the fierce warriors within creating a path beyond imagination. In this time of great uncertainty, division, and denial of our existence, there is no better time than the present to support each other and continue the work of our Trancestors. In your journey seeking yourself, the magic of connection, and the stamina required to keep thriving in ways that you need, seek stories and knowledge. This knowledge will come from holding firm boundaries and in our dreams of abundance with your community, your mentors, and your Trancestors. We call for the need of decolonizing the body, mind and spirit! To liberate ourselves from the past, as it is not only the mind that we must decolonize, but also bodies, both in the sense of undoing colonial violence and undoing the violence left behind by heteronormativity and white supremacy. As we water the roots of our collective MANA [Power], we nurture not only our individual growth but also the flourishing of our entire Trans community. "Water the Roots" is both a reflection and celebration - a reminder that the strength of our present and future is deeply intertwined with the wisdom and experiences of those who have come before us all.



Safara

She/Her, 19



"Being Black and trans and a woman, these are all parts of my identity that I hold deeply close to me. I think about what it means to hold those identities at one time, and also what it means to take care of myself. As Black trans people, we are constantly thinking about community care, mutual aid, how we can help our siblings. But how do we take care of ourselves?"

"I take care of myself by giving myself rest, giving myself sleep. This is not me not being productive. No, this is productive. This is giving myself time to be well maintained, rested. And by doing that, it allows me to be the best person I can be. It allows me to show up for community."

"Our transcestors didn't have the opportunity to put themselves first. They were focused on survival. Our ancestors have fought to give us the right to do that. And so it's almost a disservice to them if we don't give ourselves care because they couldn't."

"No matter how passionate you can be about your work, it can still be draining if you do too much, if you're in too many places. I had to reassess where I was needed the most. And that doesn't mean that you don't care about the work just because you're stepping back from some things to make more space for yourself."

Casey

He/Him, 16



"We can't sustain a good, healthy society if we're not supporting every member of it. We're never going to be happy if we're still ostracizing members of our society. We all have to work together for this to work."

"I take advantage of all the resources that I have. I go to my youth center, I hang out with other kids like me. It gives you that feeling that you're not alone. There's other people going through it too, and you can make each other stronger."

"I think the first step is to not be so hard on yourself, because I know a lot of trans people are very harsh on themselves and their bodies, and I am too. And I think the first step is to get over that and recognize that you deserve love. You deserve to be loved and you deserve to love yourself. And what makes that easier is those communities."

"You can't do it alone. You need other people. You need that support. I'm still in that process. I'm not as great as I could be, but I will be. And I just have to be patient. It's different for everyone. You just got to trust the process."

"I'm still on that journey of loving myself. And of course, I always wish I could be a little further along in that. But I think patience is really important for sustainability, because if you're not patient, then you're just going to burn yourself out and then you won't get anywhere."

Ms. Dede

She/Her, Executive
Director and Founder
of La Gender Inc.



"Sustainability has changed since my younger days. During my younger days, there was no sustainability. We couldn't even get a job, so we couldn't get insurance, we couldn't get hormone therapy or continue our transition. There was no mental health therapy. There were no support groups.

There was just no sustainability at all really. We lived in the shadows or in the night."

"I want to help. But if I can't help myself, I can't help nobody else. I have to make sure I put those priorities first. I used to put myself on the back burner a lot, and that's how I ran myself into the ground, because I just always felt guilty if I thought of myself, if I thought of any kind of way of doing self care. So now I don't think like that."

"You have to keep that spiritual space strong and keep it in touch with who you really are, because that's the real you, there's only one spirit like you. And when this body goes away, your spirit will go somewhere, but it won't die. It will live on. You need to feed your spirit soul food every day, all day because that's where your strength comes from. That's where everything, your wisdom, everything that you need to do in this world, whatever your purpose is, it's going to come from there."

Ms. Janetta

She/Her, CEO of TGI Justice Project



"What sustainability looked like for me as a child wasn't exactly considered sustainability because there was always this concern of losing or not being in a stable housing situation, being in an environment that was very unsafe. It was just a struggle."

"What it looks like for me today is living in a safe and comfortable housing situation. Having a lot more life-affirming experiences that empowers and inspires. Maintaining who comes into my home and who doesn't and developing friendships. Staying connected to people."

"Sustainability is safe housing. Reasonable income to meet the socioeconomic gap. Various opportunities and access at wellness practices. And surrounding yourself with people that love you and believe in you."

"I have to have [community] in order to create security and have an opportunity to talk for my mental wellness and for me to be in a place to create the sustainability that one needs.

Surrounding myself with people that love me, care for me, believe in me, support me."

"I would say get some rest. Drink lots of water. Find a place that feeds your soul. Meditate. Look around and find out what practices, what healing practices, are going to work for you. It could be yoga, it could be acupuncture, whatever those things are. Meet with a mental health professional, if that's what you need."

Healing is Power

By: Kio Rei (He/They)



 @kio-rei

 @kio-rei_

 kio-rei

 kio-rei

Healing is power.

Simple

By: Paris Woodward-Ganz (He/Him)

The day softly opens, now years have passed by,
There's a brand new thing dawning, with stars in their eyes.
There's a half empty vial that I draw from each week,
and a million empty bottles lying near that I'll keep.
I have an apartment in a city that is barraged by the rain.
I light a candle, make tea, proud of all that I've gained
I have a girlfriend who holds me when the world has gone bad,
It's been ages since I've heard such a beautiful laugh.
I go to classes each day like I'm ready to learn,
enjoy the people I meet when everyday I return,
to my own little studio away from the world.
I'm *Paris* not *defender*. A boy, not a girl.
I stand proud like a tree, unafraid to disappear.
Branches won't bend under the weight of this year,
I am my own garden, together we thrive.
I'm no longer just living, I'm the boy who survived.



The intersection of being both Black and transgender or nonbinary may make young people more susceptible to negative experiences and chronic stress stemming from their multiple marginalized social statuses (Bowleg & Bauer, 2014; Jones & Neblett, 2017).

Addressing Burnout

What is burnout?

Burnout is an ongoing state of feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, and emotionally drained due to consistent stress.

RELAX



REFLECT



REPLENISH



REGROUP



What can I do to take care of myself?

1. Allow yourself to feel your emotions without judgment.
2. Decrease your emotional intensity by resting, journaling, enjoying hobbies, etc.
3. Channel your emotions by pivoting to action instead of despair.
4. Seek support from friends, family, therapy, your pods, etc.

8



91



15



7



Pod Mapping

Pod: People, communities, and resources you can call on for support


- 1) Write your name in the middle solid green circle.
- 2) The surrounding bold-outlined circles are your pod. Write the names of the people who are in your pod.
- 3) The dotted lines surrounding your pod are people who are "movable." They are people that could be moved into your pod but need a little more work. For example, you might need to build more relationships or trust with them.
- 4) The larger circles at the edge of the page are for networks, communities, or groups that could be resources for you. It could be your local LGBTQ+ center, GSA, or youth group.

Your pod(s) may shift over time, as your needs or relationships shift. We encourage people to have conversations with their pod people, as well as to actively grow their pod and support each other.





Reflections



How do you take care of yourself emotionally, physically, spiritually, etc.?



What brings you joy?

What makes you feel grounded and safe?



What are your body's warning signs for burnout?






Reflections




How can care be a community activity?




Who is a part of your support system?

What are 3 things you can do when you feel overwhelmed?



What are 3 affirmations you can say to yourself?



Resources

Trans
LifeLine

Trevor
Project

National Queer
and Trans
Therapists of
Color Network

Black
Emotional and
Mental Health
Collective

“Healing Justice
Lineages” by
Cara Page &
Erica Woodland

“Marsha and I [Sylvia] fought a lot for the liberation of our people. We did a lot back then. Marsha and I had a building on Second Street, which is called STAR House... Marsha and I just decided it was time to help each other and help our other kids. We fed people and clothed people. We kept the building going. We went out and hustled the streets. We paid the rent. We didn’t want the kids out in the streets hustling. They would go out and rip off food. There was always food in the house and everyone had fun.”

Sylvia Rivera

Marsha P. Johnson





"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time."

John Lubbock



 **Transgender Law Center**

POWELL AN'
PAINT.
est. 2024

COVER SYMBOLS: Pickerelweed - Water Lily - Brown Bear - Mountain Lion - Walnut Tree - Chokeberry Bush - American Bullfrog - Australian Cattle Dog (Red Heeler)