Why is this important?

When resisting various forces of domination, you may be met with repression taking many forms: (police) violence (or the threat of it), surveillance, criminilization, incarceration, among other things. We've got to do what we can to be prepared for that. But also, when we are erecting our own occupations, or opening up gaps in the totality of state control, it is important to learn how to take care of one another against all the everyday shit that bubbles up from the inside, too. No matter what efforts we make to combat internalized oppressions and imbalances in power, it has the potential to rear its head. Not to mention all our anxiety, depression, alienation, fear, and all the other feelings we can't even put into words. Shit falls apart and we lose people when we don't make this work a priority.

A note about consent

Take measures to ensure that you are getting consent from folks before providing care whenever possible. Be sensitive to the tools and practices that the individual (or community) in question might already be using. Honor and strengthen those practices and offer information about alternatives if it makes sense or it is requested of you. Always ask folks what help they need first, they probably already have a good idea of what support they need or want anyway.

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This handout was put together by Power Makes Us Sick, with a lot of input from Out of Action (outofaction.blackblogs.org) and other friends. We are currently visiting la ZAD [*btw sry for the french translations*]. PMS is an anti-authoritarian, feminist collective focusing on autonomous health care practices and networks. PMS seeks to understand and address the ways that our mental, physical, and social health is impacted by imbalances in and abuses of power. We see centralizing the importance of autonomous healthcare as one of the most direct interventions to the necropolitics of state and capital's global sovereignty. We can see that mobility, forced or otherwise, is an increasingly common aspect of life in the anthropocene. PMS is motivated to develop free tools of solidarity, resistance, and sabotage that respond to these conditions and are informed by a deep concern for planetary well-being. If you'd like to meet with us while we're here to talk emotional support or anything else, contact us at -- powermakesussick [at] riseup.net

EMOTIONAL FIRST AID BASICS: HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR FRIEND

Often people, especially if they have a history of contact with violence, do not know how to vocalize their need for help, and tend to isolate themselves. It is important to talk after a stressful situation and before people shut down. Keep an eye out for folks on the fringes, who look confused, who are getting really silent, and to reach out to them to check in on how they might be doing.

Maybe you are unsure what you can do to be supportive. Just being around them and behaving as usual, without pitying or pushing your friend can be very helpful. Try to be accepting of their reactions. It's important that your friend can feel safe and relaxed around you.

Don't forget that people can appear to be doing alright for a while after the event, and the onset of traumatic reactions can be delayed.

Try to be an attentive and active listener. We often tend to give advice instead of focusing our attention on listening. Listening can happen in a variety of ways, too. Listening with your eyes, your ears, and the way you're affected by what someone shares with you.

Talking about what happened helps to process, when people are ready to share. Friends might not want to share right away, but try to make yourself available when they are able to.

Especially if you have been robbed of bodily autonomy in anyway, being pressured or pushed often causes people to withdraw and distance themselves.

While processing traumatic events, taking care of every day tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping can become overwhelming. Helping out with running errands and general maintenance can be very supportive, but watch out to not take over and limit your friend's ability to self-determine the course of their everyday life.

Try not to take it personally if your friend is irritable or distanced and aloof, and don't withdraw your support because of it. These are common reactions in the aftermath of stressful events.

Try to be patient. People respond to traumatic events at different speeds & in different ways.

This can be a challenging time for you as well. Make sure to take care of and be good to yourself. Remember to open up to your friends and let them know how you are doing.

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