This zine is thinking about... HEALING
Territory Acknowledgment

The Anti-Violence Project would like to acknowledge the Communities and Nations in whose territories we work and live: the Lekwungen (Chekonein, Chilcowitch, Swengwhung, Kosampsom, Whymilth, Teetchamitsa, Kakyakaan, Songhees, Esquimalt) and W'SANÉĆ (STAUTW/Tsawout, WJOŁELP/Tsartlip, BOKEĆEN/Pauquachin, WSIKEM/Tseycum) Peoples. We would also like to express gratitude to the other local Peoples and Nations in this region including the MALAXEt (Malahat), Scia’new (Beecher Bay), T’Sou-ke (Sooke), Ditidaht, and Pacheedaht Peoples.

We recognize the inherent connections between colonialism and all forms of violence. Recognizing the violence of ongoing colonialism and engaging in anti-colonial actions is critical to our work as anti-violence advocates.

The Anti-Violence Project

We offer services to all people of all genders who have been impacted by gender-based violence, either by directly experiencing it, through causing harm to someone, or supporting or knowing someone who has experienced it.

We promote an anti-oppressive approach to anti-violence work that seeks to recognize the interconnectedness of forms of violence and the different ways that gender-based violence manifests in society, based on various systemic and institutionalized forms of violence.

We strive to provide anti-oppressive and sex-positive services, advocacy and action on-campus and off, in partnership and collaboration, in order to address and resist gender-based and all forms of violence.

Sexualized violence can be a traumatic violation of the body, mind, and spirit that can profoundly affect your health and emotional wellbeing.

Sexualized violence can happen to anyone. Nobody ever “asks for it” or deserves to be assaulted regardless of what they were wearing, who they were spending time with, how much they had to drink, and so on.

Everyone has the right to personal safety. If you were sexually assaulted, it is important that you know that it was NOT your fault.

There is no “type” of person who gets sexually assaulted; it happens to people of all genders, cultures, races, ages and sexual orientations.

The same is true of people who cause harm.

A person who causes harm is not always a stranger in fact, most often, sexual assault is committed by someone the survivor knows.

Sexualized violence is about power and control. A person may use intimidation, physical force or manipulation to commit a sexual assault. + it’s STILL NOT YOUR FAULT.
Reactions to Sexualized Violence

Sexualized violence is a personal and destructive crime, and its effects on you can be physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive.

Listed below are some common reactions you may experience after sexualized violence.

but it is important to remember that there is not one “normal” reaction to sexual assault.

They can be brief in duration or last a very long time.

Your individual response will be different depending on your personal circumstances. These symptoms are listed under different categories, but it’s important to note that not all symptoms fall neatly under one category or another.

For example, many physical symptoms are related to emotional stress, and many emotional reactions are related to psychological pain.

Again, there is no right or wrong way to feel.

The AntiViolence Project has created this booklet in order to provide survivors of sexualized violence with useful tools and information to help in the healing process.

It doesn’t matter if you fought back, or if you did nothing during an assault you made the right decision for you, and you survived.
Emotional
Feeling Overwhelmed
Guilt
Sadness/Depression
Feeling Lost and/or Abandoned
Fear/Panic
Anger/Outrage/Fury
Helpless/Powerless
Vulnerability
Loss of Self Esteem
Numbness
Shock
Irritable
Self Blame
Grief

Physical
Nausea/Vomiting
Tremors/Shakiness
Loss of Coordination
Sleep Disturbances
Easily Startled/Jumpy
Increased Arousal
Decreased Arousal
Chills
Diarrhea
Chest Pains
Rapid Heart Rate
Stomach Pain
Headaches
Muscle Aches
Difficulty Breathing
Fatigue
Appetite Changes
Crying
Tense

Behavioural
Withdrawal/Avoidance
Suspiciousness
Increased Smoking
Increased Alcohol/Drug use
Unusual Behaviour
Overly Vigilant to the Environment
Excessive Humor
Emotional Outburst
Missing Classes
Changes in Appearance
Changes in Usual Activities
Act Like Nothing has Changed

Cognitive
Difficulty Making Decisions
Flashbacks
Nightmares
Confusion
Disorientation
Difficulty with Calculations
Difficulty Concentrating
Memory Problems
Decreased Attention Span
Racing Thoughts
Religious Confusion

“Just as violations of safety are life-destroying, the means of establishing safety are life-enhancing.”

Safety & Safety Skills

“In order to begin the healing process, you need to feel and be safe. You cannot begin to heal from your wounds, psychological or physical, if you are still being wounded. The sense of safety is also internal. You need to feel safe with your thoughts, feelings and behaviours before you can begin to contemplate the trauma. This does not mean you won’t sometimes have troublesome thoughts or feelings, but rather that you feel you can manage them.”

~ Matasakis
Physical Safety:
Until people are physically out of harm’s way, addressing traumatic events or responses is not a good idea. Often, becoming physically safe is the required first step to healing.

Mental Safety:
Many survivors have thoughts and beliefs that make it hard to feel safe in their own mind ("It’s my fault, I can’t handle this"). You may struggle with thoughts of suicide, flashbacks, or intrusive imagery. The voices of your abuser or other toxic relationships may also play in your head. Thoughts may feel out of control or seem unable to stop.

Emotional Safety:
Emotional safety is the ability to feel one’s emotions and not become overwhelmed, terrorized, or retraumatized by them. Even people who feel numb to their emotions are usually afraid to accept them as they fear being swept away by the force of those emotions. Many survivors will not know what this means or what this feels like.

Four Types of Safety

Spiritual Safety:
The experience of trauma can leave people questioning their relationship to the Divine or the Universe, or even their very sense of self or identity. Or perhaps a survivor has lost their belief in a higher power or in the...
Being grounded means being aware of your body, your feelings, your thoughts and feelings connected to them. It is about being grounded in current reality rather than being overwhelmed with powerful emotions. When you are in touch with your physical and emotional experience you are better able to keep yourself safe.

Most survivors have used some grounding techniques to get through difficult times, you might not even be aware of them. It is important to become aware of what has worked for you.

**For example,** one simple device is to keep something with you that will remind you to come back to the safety of the present moment and your current experience, such as a grounding object. Carrying a stone in your pocket or purse is useful for many people.

**TACTICAL INSIGHT**

Keep your eyes open, scan the room, and turn the light on to stay in touch with the present. Stay neutral, avoid judgments of ‘good’ and ‘bad’. For example, instead of “The walls are blue; I don’t like blue because it reminds me of depression”, simply say, “The walls are blue” and move on.

If you like, you can rate your mood before and after grounding, to test whether it worked. Before grounding, rate your level of emotional pain (0-10, where 10 means extreme ‘pain’).

Then, rate it afterward. Has it gone down?

Use grounding when you are faced with a trigger, enraged, dissociating, having a substance craving, or whenever your emotional pain goes above 6 (on a 0-10 scale).
It may not be useful to talk about feelings or journal/write at this time you may want to stay away from distressing feelings, or not get in touch with them.

Processing feelings can happen later.

Grounding puts healthy distance between you and these feelings.

Ways of Grounding
Three major ways of grounding are described below mental, physical, and soothing.

“Mental” means focusing your mind;
“physical” means focusing your senses (e.g. touch, hearing); and
“soothing” means talking to yourself in a very kind way.
You may find that one type works better for you, or all types may be helpful.

Mental Grounding
Describe your environment in detail, using all your senses. Play a “categories” game with yourself.

Try to think of “types of dogs”, “jazz musicians”, “countries that begin with A”, “cars”, “TV shows”, or “cities”.
Describe an everyday activity in detail, such as a meal that you cook.
Read something, saying each word to yourself.
Or read each letter backward so that you focus on the letters and not the meaning of words.
Count to 10 or say the alphabet very slowly.

Physical Grounding
Run cool or warm water over your hands.
Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can.
Touch various objects around you.
Notice textures, colours, materials, weight, temperature.
Compare objects you touch: is one colder? Lighter?
Dig your heels into the floor.

Notice the tension centred in your heels as you do this.

Remind yourself that you are connected to the ground.

Notice: whenever you feel triggered.
Notice your body: the weight of your body in the chair; wiggling your toes in your socks; the feel of your back against the chair. You are connected to the world.

Stretch.
Extend your fingers, arms, or legs as far as you can; roll your head around.
Clench and release your fists.
Walk slowly, noticing each step, saying "left" or "right" with each step.

Eat something, describing the flavours in detail.
Focus on your breathing, noticing each inhale and exhale.

Repeat a pleasant word to yourself on each inhale (e.g. a favourite colour, or a soothing word such as "safe" or "easy").

Say a coping statement: "I can handle this, this feeling will pass."
Plan a safe treat for yourself, such as a piece of chocolate, a nice dinner, or a warm bath.
Think of things you are looking forward to in the next week.

Soothing Grounding
Say kind statements, as if you were talking to a small child. For example, "You are a good person going through a hard time. You'll get through this."

Think of favourites.
Think of your favourite colour, animal, season, food, time of day, TV show. Picture people you care about and look at photographs of them.
Remember the words to an inspiring song, quotation, or poem that makes you feel better.
5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Here and Now Exercise

This exercise can be helpful if you are having problems staying present or feeling anxious.

What you do is:
Name 5 things that you see.
Name 5 things that you hear.
Name 5 things that you sense/touch, e.g. feet in shoes, heart beating, temperature.

Name 4 things that you see.
Name 4 things that you hear.
Name 4 things that you sense/touch, e.g. feet in shoes, heart beating, temperature.

Name 3 things that you see.
Name 3 things that you hear.
Name 3 things that you sense/touch, e.g. feet in shoes, heart beating, temperature.

Name 2 things that you see.
Name 2 things that you hear.
Name 2 things that you sense/touch, e.g. feet in shoes, heart beating, temperature.

Name 1 thing that you see.
Name 1 thing that you hear.
Name 1 thing that you sense/touch, e.g. feet in shoes, heart beating, temperature.

Each time you identify something that you see, hear or feel, you say:
"I see..., I see..., I see..., I see..., I hear..., I hear..., etc."

The same object, sound, or feeling can be used twice, or more, in a row.
It can be repeated as often as you need to.
The exercise can be done in silence or out loud.
You can use it in busy or quiet places.

This exercise works best if you are sitting down or standing still.
(You should not do it while you are driving.)

This rhythmic repetition can be relaxing and calming.

More Grounding Ideas:

Call someone (e.g. crisis line; friend)
Pet an animal
Imagine growing roots
Breathing Exercises
Rubbing feet on floor
Being barefoot in the grass
Gardening
Smelling flowers or essential oils
Orienting self to here and now
What day is it? What time is it?
Who am I? Where am I?

Practice the Abdominal Breathing or Calming Breath Exercise for five minutes every day for at least two weeks.
If possible, find a regular time each day to do this so that your breathing exercise becomes a habit.
With practice you can learn in a short period of time to "damp down" the physiological reactions underlying anxiety and panic. By extending your practice of either breathing exercise to a month or longer, you will begin to retrain yourself to breathe from your abdomen. The more you can shift the centre of your breathing from your chest to your abdomen, the more consistently you will feel relaxed on an ongoing basis. Once you feel you’ve gained some mastery in the use of either technique, apply it when you feel stressed, anxious, or when you experience the onset of panic symptoms.

Abdominal Breathing Exercise

1) Note the level of tension you’re feeling. Place one hand on your abdomen right beneath your rib cage.

2) Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into the “bottom” of your lungs in other words, send the air as low down as you can. If you’re breathing from your abdomen, your hand should actually rise. Your chest should move only slightly while your abdomen expands.

3) When you’ve taken in a full breath, pause for a moment, then exhale through your nose or mouth depending on your preference. Be sure to exhale fully. As you exhale, allow your whole body to just let go. (You might visualize your arms and legs going loose and limp like a rag doll.)

4) Do ten slow, full, abdominal breaths. Try to keep your breathing smooth and regular, without gulping in a big breath or letting your breath out all at once. It will help to slow down your breathing if you very slowly count to four on the inhale and then very slowly count to four on the exhale. Remember to pause briefly at the end of each inhalation. Count from ten down to one, counting backwards one number with each exhalation. The process should go like this:

- Slow inhale...Pause...Slow exhale...Count "ten"
- Slow inhale...Pause...Slow exhale...Count "nine"
- Slow inhale...Pause...Slow exhale...Count "eight"
5) Keep up the exercise for at least three to five minutes. This should involve going through at least ten cycles of in five, hold five.

Allow these variations in your counting to occur if they do, and just continue with the exercise for up to five minutes, remembering to take two normal breaths between each cycle.

If you start to feel lightheaded while practicing this exercise, stop for thirty seconds and then start again.

As you continue the exercise, you may notice that you can count higher when you exhale than when you inhale.

6) Throughout the exercise, keep your breathing smooth and regular, without gulping in breaths or breathing out suddenly.

7) Option: Each time you exhale, you may wish to say “relax,” “calm,” “let go,” or any other relaxing word or phrase, silently to yourself.

Allow your whole body to let go as you do this.

If you keep this up each time you practice, eventually just saying your relaxing word by itself will bring on a mild state of relaxation.
Self Care
Learning to care for yourself is a lifelong journey.
Your needs will change over time, and you will get better at it with practice.
There are many different aspects of yourself to take care of: your body, your emotional and mental wellbeing, your community, your financial life, your spiritual life, your family and relationships, your mission or meaning in life, your career, your sexuality, and your healing.

Eat, Drink, Sleep, and Be Merry
Eating well can be a challenge for many survivors. Aim for two to three good meals a day including plenty of fruits, vegetables and protein.
Drinking at least eight glasses of water a day will help your body flush out toxins that are released in the process of deep emotional work.
Sleep regularly, seven to ten hours a night. And include pleasure in your life.

What makes you smile or laugh?
What brings that sense of warmth or comfort to your body?
Perhaps you enjoy petting your cat, dancing, feeling the warmth of the sun, taking a luxurious hot bath... Do something pleasurable at least once per week. Notice your enjoyment.

Let Your Body Move
Movement, including walking, biking, aerobic workouts, dancing, or running can have a profound effect on your physical and emotional health.
Movement oxygenates your body and increases your circulation. This helps in the process of healing and in relaxing. Whatever movement you choose, practice being "in" your body while you do it. Use this as a time to feel your breath and body sensations, rather than a time for checking out.
This will assist you in being more embodied during all your activities, especially sex.
Breathe
Breathing seems obvious, but it is not.
Drop your breath lower in your body so that your diaphragm and chest move when you breathe.
Notice when you are holding your breath, or breathing shallowly, and breathe deeply again.

Treat Yourself with Dignity
How do you talk to yourself?
Do you handle yourself with care and respect?
Imagine how you would speak to a young child or a friend who is feeling afraid.
You would not yell at her or be harsh.
Rather, you would be comforting, offering support and guidance.

How you treat yourself internally is as important as what you do on the outside.

Give Yourself Lots of Acknowledgment
Actively acknowledge yourself for your steps in healing.
Notice all the risks you are taking, and give yourself support and kudos.

Make Time for Solitude
Solitude is also important to selfcare.
Make time for yourself weekly.
You can use the time to write in a journal, sit quietly, do artwork, meditate, or whatever else serves your process.

Incorporate Spirituality in Your Life
Many people also incorporate a spiritual practice or meditation into their lives.
A spiritual practice can offer sustenance and a larger perspective to rest within.
Meditation can be an excellent way to touch base with yourself, develop discipline, and learn to notice your own emotional processes.
It is also a good way to learn to notice what is happening in your body, and to feel centered and at peace with yourself.
81 Presents to Give Yourself

Walk instead of ride
Search out a long lost friend
Light a candle
Frame a picture
Fly a paper airplane
Try a new food
Jump into a pile of leaves
Sign up for a class
Meditate
Hug someone
Walk in the rain
Waste a little time
Return something you’ve borrowed
Turn off the TV and talk
Take a bubble bath
Bake bread
Send a card to someone for no reason
Laugh at yourself
Walk barefoot
Encourage a young person
Allow yourself to make a mistake
Go to a fair
Rearrange a room
Contact someone you’ve been thinking about
Surprise a child
List 10 things you do well

Sing in the shower
Pay a compliment
Curl up by a fire with some cocoa
Organize some small corner of your life
Draw a picture (you CAN draw!)
Smell a flower
Clean out your wallet
Give something you don’t like
Buy a ticket to a special event
Follow an impulse
Volunteer some time to a good cause
Give your dog a bone
Let someone do you a favour
Make a surprise gift
Do something hard to do
Let someone care about you
Break a bad habit, if just for today

Look at the stars
Use a new word
Walk to the nearest park
Help a stranger
Take a risk
Take a rainy day nap
Hum
Tell a joke
Talk to a pet
Go for a swim
Practice courage in one small way
Go wading
Kiss someone

These are only some ideas, the space below is for your own thoughts to fill.
### On Campus Resources

**ANTIVIOLENCE PROJECT**
University of Victoria Student Union Building Room B027 (basement level)
250 472 4388
info@antiviolenceproject.org
www.antiviolenceproject.org

**UVIC CAMPUS SECURITY**
Office located in Main Bus Loop CSEC
Security Services: 250 721 7599
Crisis & Emergency Line: 250 721 6683
Administration
Web: uvic.ca/security/

**HOUSING / RESIDENCE**
250 721 8395
http://www.uvic.ca/residence/

### On Campus Academic Support Resources

If you have been sexually assaulted, and are finding that this has affected your ability to study or perform academically, you may be able to request an academic concession or deferral. The university requires that your counsellor or doctor provide a letter to support your request.

**OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTRAR**

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA HEALTH SERVICES**
Jack Petersen Health Centre 3800 Finnerty Road
250 721 8492
http://www.stas.uvic.ca/health/

**UVIC COUNSELING SERVICES**
University Centre
250 721 8341
http://www.coun.uvic.ca/

**OMBUDSPERSON**
Student Union Building, Room B205
250 721 8357
www.uvss.uvic.ca/ombudsperson

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### Community Resources

**Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC)**
3060 Cedar Hill Road #201, Victoria, BC V8T 3J5
Crisis & Info: 250 383 3232
www.vsoc.ca

**Vancouver Island Crisis Line**
Confidential location
24 hour telephone: 1 888 494 3888
6:00 - 10:00 PM Monday - Friday
Texting Number: 250 800 3806
http://www.vicrisis.ca/

**VICTORIA WOMEN'S TRANSITION HOUSE**
Community Office: #100 3060 Cedar Hill Rd.
Victoria, BC V8T 3J5
250 592 2927
www.transitionhouse.net

**MEN'S TRAUMA CENTRE**
203 1420 Quadra St., Victoria BC
250 381 3676
www.menstrauma.com
This zine was written by a magical and unknown volunteer and put together by another.

Y.E.