



## What does healthy activism look like?

- A happy person who happens to do activism
- Not always being in “Activist Mode”
- Equal energy exchange – having activism give us energy, not just drain it
- Time to think, reflect and play
- Setting boundaries for self and others, and communicating them
- Perspective and context – it is not just about me
- Asking for help
- Celebrating the wins
- Eating and sleeping well
- Doing the work because we want to, not just because of deadlines
- Debriefing
- Giving ourselves permission to be bummed out and sad or to grieve
- Setting goals
- Recognising our motivations and core values
- More emotional equilibrium

## What does a healthy organisational culture look like?

- Respect
- Support
- Space for vulnerability and flexibility
- Support for part time work and time off (proper lunch breaks and regular holidays)
- No guilt trips or unspoken expectations
- Group check-ins
- Sharing the load
- Empathy
- Social get-togethers and community building
- A shared “account” which group members contribute to, which can be used in times of joy or hardship in group members’ lives
- Recognising humanity

- Rewarding when people are honest about their burnout, and healthy HR responses
- Normalising holistic wellbeing and breaking down stigma
- Building trust among group members
- Education and advocacy

### **We don't do healthy activism because:**

- Activism is tied up with our egos and identities
- There is peer pressure to always work hard
- Expectations of self and others – we are our own worst critics
- Guilt (the “shoulds”)
- Fear – What will happen if I don't?
- A culture of burnout in activism and a lack of healthy role models
- Cause capitalism
- A skewed sense of responsibility – We feel responsible for improving the situation, but we do not want to take responsibility for our own feelings. Ties in with conflict aversion and an unwillingness to invest in self-care
- Martyrdom
- We love our movement and community
- Activism is addictive
- It is easier to avoid our feelings

### **What advice would we give a friend who is going through burnout?**

#### In relation to *ego*:

- Recognise it is not just you doing activism
- Embrace responsibility and ditch victimhood
- Connect with others doing similar work
- Practice acceptance and manage your expectations

#### In relation to *identity*:

- You're worthy, you are not what you do
- Find hobbies and things you love
- Know your strengths

#### In relation to *peer pressure*:

- Make new friends
- Don't blame yourself

- Get out of hostile environments
- Control how you react
- Call out the culture
- Create space to discuss communally
- Find champions within your movement who will advocate for improvements
- It doesn't matter what other people think

In relation to *high expectations of self*:

- Set clear expectations and assert boundaries
- Lower your expectations
- Changing landscapes of organisations and campaigns requires revisiting values and expectations
- Use clear and honest communication
- Holistic management plans and group agreements could help

In relation to *guilt*:

- Maybe you are not identifying with the work
- Create a non-shaming culture and call out bad standards and behaviour
- Share the responsibility
- Recognise that guilt and shame are not useful
- Recognise the need for change and release guilt and shame

In relation to *fear*:

- Practice mindfulness and breathing
- Give yourself space
- Accept that negative things are happening and there is a limited amount we can control about what is already happening
- You can't help others if you can't help yourself
- Think rationally
- Talk with others
- Challenge your fear with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

In relation to *capitalism*:

- Recognise that as activists we are also victims of oppression
- Accept your limited capacity
- Direct your anger toward the system
- The personal is political and self-care is a radical act
- Maintain friendships outside the bubble - It's important to not always be 'on'

In relation to *addiction*:

- Recognise activism can be an addiction
- Find other healthy addictions
- Feel your feelings