

# Writing Towards Healing: A Creative Space for Those Working Towards a Better World

Facilitator: Nanee Sajeev (they/she)

Wanna chat about anti-violence? Email me at [nanee@endsexualviolencect.org](mailto:nanee@endsexualviolencect.org)

Wanna chat about art or anything else? Email me at [nsajeev2285@gmail.com](mailto:nsajeev2285@gmail.com)



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At the time of this presentation, Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon served as SAMHSA Assistant Secretary. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the moderator and panelists and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.

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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

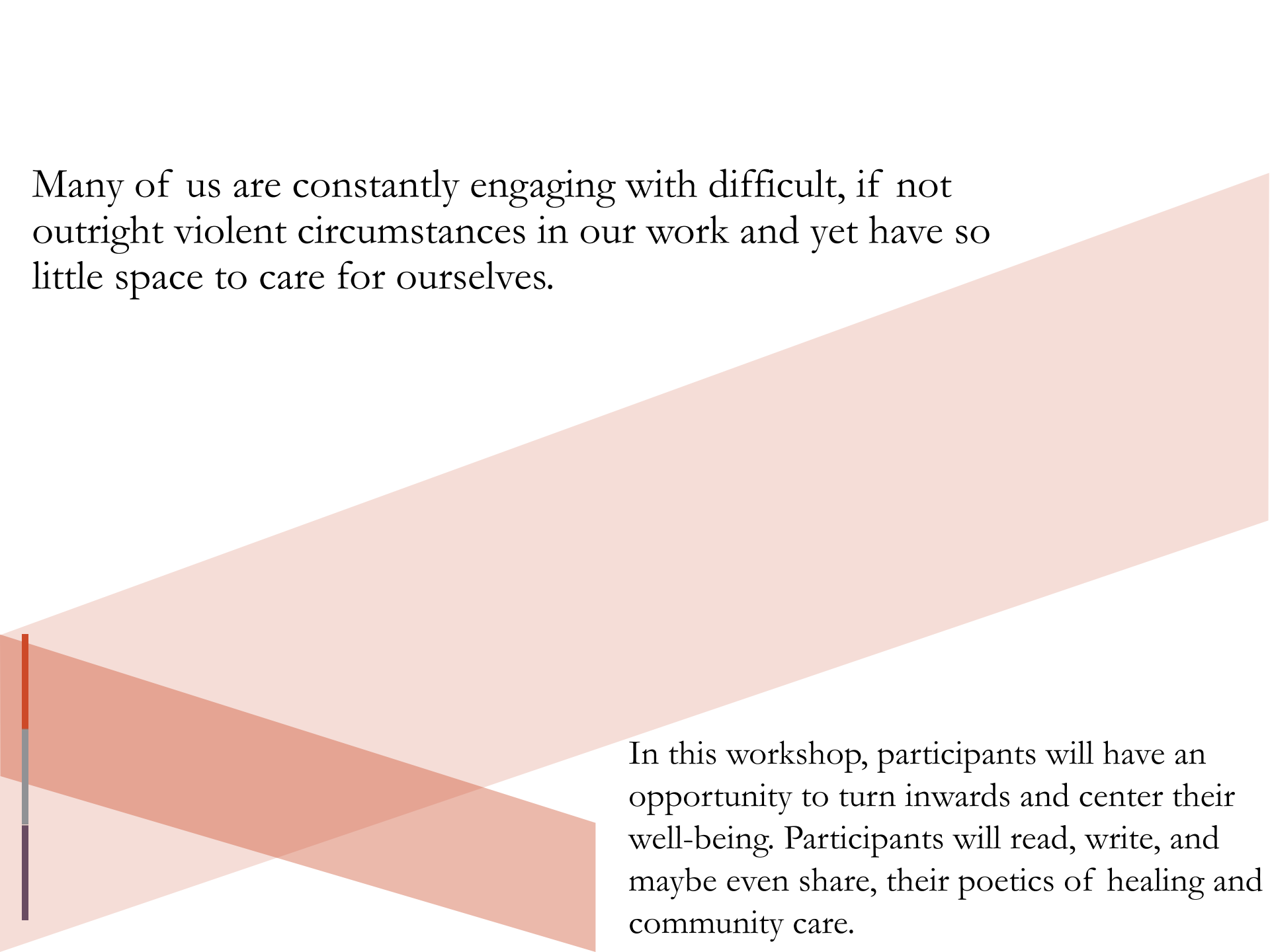
INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS



Many of us are constantly engaging with difficult, if not outright violent circumstances in our work and yet have so little space to care for ourselves.

In this workshop, participants will have an opportunity to turn inwards and center their well-being. Participants will read, write, and maybe even share, their poetics of healing and community care.

Nanee Sajeev is Malayalee-American writer committed to learning and growing towards liberation. Nanee is a student of many artists and leaders, whether they have been in their physical classrooms or not: Safia Elhillo, Kaveh Akbar, Hanif Abdurraqib, Fatimah Asghar, Mariame Kaba and more.

In this workshop, and in any other spaces that Nanee facilitates, they hope to center patience, care, and growth.

# The goal is to just write



1

You don't have to be an ~artist~ to write and explore your feelings

2

Poems are not hidden puzzles! There is no right answer!

3

No shame! There are few things more powerful than honest vulnerability

# Brain Dump



# Brain Dump

- 5 small comforts



# Brain Dump

- 5 small comforts
- 5 of your people, your loved ones

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- Apathy looks like \_\_\_\_\_ (5)

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- Apathy looks like \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 5 things that belong in your home, no matter what

# Brain Dump

- 5 small comforts
- 5 of your people, your loved ones
- Apathy looks like \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 5 things that belong in your home, no matter what
- 5 things that would exist in a world without violence

# Word Pool

As we read and discuss the next two poems, write down any word or phrase that catches you.

This is to get our writing brains warmed up, ready, and inspired.



## Calling A Wolf A Wolf (Inpatient) by Kaveh Akbar

like the sky I've been too quiet    everyone's forgotten I'm here    I've tried all the usual tricks  
pretending I've just been made terrifying    like a suddenly carnivorous horse    like a rabid hissing  
sapphire    the medical response has been clear    *sit patiently until invited to leave*    outside the lake  
is evaporating    dry blue like a galley proof    a month ago they dragged up a drowned tourist  
his bloatwhite belly was filled with radishes and lamb shank    his entire digestive system was a tiny  
museum of pleasure    compared to him I am healthy and unremarkable    here I am reading a  
pharmaceutical brochure    here I am dying at an average pace    envy is the only deadly sin that's  
no fun for the sinner    this makes sadness seem more like a tradition    loyalty to a parent's past  
I try to find small comforts    purple clover growing in the long grass    a yellow spider on the  
windowsill    I am less horrible than I could be    I've never set a house on fire    never thrown a  
firstborn off a bridge    still my whole life I answered every cry for help with a pour    with a turning  
away    I've given this coldness many names    thinking if it had a name it would have a solution  
thinking if I called a wolf a wolf I might dull its fangs    I carried the coldness like a diamond for  
years    holding it close    near as blood    until one day I woke and it was fully inside me    both  
of us ruined and unrecognizable    two coins on a train track    the train crushed into one

## If They Should Come For Us

By Fatimah Asghar

these are my people & I find  
them on the street & shadow  
through any wild all wild  
my people my people  
a dance of strangers in my blood  
the old woman's sari dissolving to wind  
bindi a new moon on her forehead  
I claim her my kin & sew  
the star of her to my breast  
the toddler dangling from stroller  
hair a fountain of dandelion seed  
at the bakery I claim them too  
the sikh uncle at the airport  
who apologizes for the pat  
down the muslim man who abandons

his car at the traffic light drops  
to his knees at the call of the azan  
& the muslim man who sips  
good whiskey at the start of maghrib  
the lone khala at the park  
pairing her kurta with crocs  
my people my people I can't be lost  
when I see you my compass  
is brown & gold & blood  
my compass a muslim teenager  
snapback & high-tops gracing  
the subway platform  
mashallah I claim them all  
my country is made  
in my people's image

If they come for you they  
come for me too in the dead  
of winter a flock of  
aunties step out on the sand  
their dupattas turn to ocean  
a colony of uncles grind their palms  
& a thousand jasmines bell the air  
my people I follow you like  
constellations  
we hear the glass smashing the street  
& the nights opening their dark  
our names this country's wood  
for the fire my people my people  
the long years we've survived the long  
years yet to come I see you map  
my sky the light your lantern long  
ahead & I follow I follow

little prayer  
By Danez Smith

let ruin end here

let him find honey  
where there was once a slaughter

let him enter the lion's cage  
& find a field of lilacs

let this be the healing  
& if not let it be





## Prompt:

1.  
Let this be the healing  
Let it be
2.  
How have you been made terrifying? How do  
you survive?
3. Live your best life.





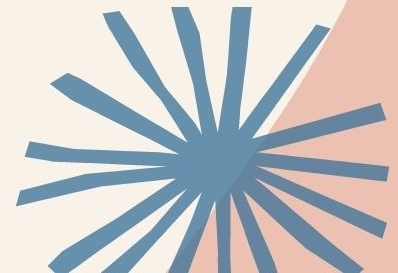
# Nanee Sajeev

Talk to me about sexual violence & the  
criminal legal system!

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Talk to me about doing healing art or  
anything else!

[nsajeev2285@gmail.com](mailto:nsajeev2285@gmail.com)





# Questions and Comments





# MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals. Our services cover the full continuum spanning mental illness prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

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