

SESSION 4: WATER – HEALING THE SOUL

RECOGNIZING MIGRATION STRESS



Many people within the Latino community in the United States carry deep stress and, in some cases, trauma related to migration. These experiences can include trauma suffered during the journey to the United States, family separation, constant fear of deportation, legal uncertainty, discrimination, language barriers and the pressure of adapting to a new culture while trying to support their families.

Even when the migration process occurred years ago, the body and nervous system can still react as if the danger were still present, since it is a survival tool that we accumulate in our cells, as we discussed in session one.

It's important to remember that these behaviors aren't a weakness, but rather normal reactions to difficult and painful experiences. Our job is to determine if, when the body activates, we're actually in danger at that particular moment, and if not, to practice grounding skills to turn off our automatic stress response and bring our awareness and body back to the present moment. It takes a lot of practice at first, as we tend to activate more frequently. So it's very important to have compassion and patience with ourselves during this process.

Recognizing the impact of migration stress is a first step toward healing, resilience and compassionate self-care. In this workshop, we will discuss how to use the healing power of water to heal emotional wounds.

HYDROTHERAPY AND AROMATHERAPY

ANCESTRAL PRACTICES FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

In this space, we invite you to reconnect with two profoundly healing ancestral practices: hydrotherapy (the therapeutic use of water) and aromatherapy (the use of essential oils of plant origin). Both support mental health and help regulate the nervous system, guiding you toward greater calm, balance and connection with yourself. These practices are not only supported by modern science but are also part of ancestral Latin American healing traditions.

HYDROTHERAPY

In many Latin communities, water has long been seen as a source of healing, cleansing and renewal. You may have heard of or participated in practices such as cleansing baths (limpias), temazcal (sweat lodge ceremonies) or river immersions. These rituals have been used to cleanse the body, calm the mind and restore emotional balance. Traditionally, they have been guided by healers to help release stress, grief and negative energy, supporting both physical and spiritual wellbeing.



Our bodies recognize the innate, ancestral wisdom of healing and leads us to more accessible, modern places for relaxation and healing, such as spas, jacuzzis, saunas, mud baths, hot springs, spa pedicures and hair salons for washes and cuts. All of these use water to honor our bodies and soothe our nervous systems. Don't you feel much better after visiting any of these places? We invite you to experience the power of water at home with readily available herbs and flowers in your own shower or bath.



AROMATHERAPY IN LATIN CULTURE

Aromatherapy, which uses the scents of plants and flowers, is also part of Latin American ancestral healing practices. Remedies may include burning copal or sage, using herbal infusions or applying oils made from plants such as lavender, chamomile or rue. These aromas are used to calm anxiety, promote relaxation and create a sacred space for healing. The use of aromatic plants is often passed down through generations, connecting individuals to their heritage and community. You probably already use this tool with synthetic diffusers; we encourage you to connect with your ancestral wisdom and use natural products that better support your nervous system.



BENEFITS AND INTEGRATION INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE

Today we know that hydrotherapy and aromatherapy can help reduce stress, relieve anxiety, and support emotional regulation. Here are some ideas:

- **A warm bath or shower**, gentle movement in the water or the conscious use of essential oils can relax the body, lower stress hormones, and activate natural healing systems.
- **A cold bath or shower** gives us energy and boosts our concentration and improves our mood. It reduces stress because it trains the nervous system and lowers tension, anger and depression, increasing our resilience. A cold shower 60–90 minutes before bed helps us sleep better.
- **Add calming oils or epsom salts to a bath** helps relax the body and improve sleep.
- **Using a diffuser or burning incense** during moments of rest can become a multi-sensory experience that honors both ancient wisdom and modern science.
- **Clearing bath** (Limpia) Cut herbs and flowers from your garden such as rosemary, lavender, roses, boil them and let them cool to use as a rinse after showering with the intention of clearing your body of heavy energies or emotions like grief and helplessness, releasing stress and restoring calm.

WATER

ANCESTRAL CRADLE OF LIFE AND HEALING

Since ancient times, water has been recognized as the first home of life. Before we are born, we all inhabit water: we float in the womb, sustained by the amniotic fluid that protects us, nourishes us and connects us to the heartbeat of the one who gestated us.



In many indigenous cultures and ancestral knowledge of our peoples, water represents the primordial mother, the memory of the body and the continuity of life. Birth is, in essence, a sacred transition through water: we pass from the inner sea of the womb to the outer world, carrying in our bodies the imprint of that first experience of care, containment, and connection. During pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, water continues to be a powerful ally for the mental, emotional and spiritual health of mothers and families.

Ancient practices linked to water — such as ritual baths, herbal cleansings, the conscious use of warm water, infusions, the sound of water and blessing ceremonies — help regulate the nervous system, release accumulated emotions, sustain grief and honor profound changes in body and identity.

Water invites us to flow with what moves, to let go of guilt, fear and overload and to remember that we are not alone: just as water sustains the body, the community sustains those who give life.

At Raíces y Alas, we work with the element of water as a healing tool for prenatal and postnatal care, remembering that healing is not about doing everything ourselves, but about allowing ourselves to be held. By reconnecting with water — through breath, touch, ritual and intention — mothers and families can restore their emotional balance, strengthen the bond with their babies and honor the ancestral wisdom that resides within their bodies.

Water teaches us that tenderness is also strength, and that by taking care of ourselves, we follow the path that our ancestors opened for us.

GUIDED WATER PRACTICE: SUPPORT, FLOW, AND REBIRTH

FOR PRENATAL AND POSTNATAL EMOTIONAL CARE

This practice honors the body that gestates, that has gestated, and that is caring for a child.

Space Preparation **Duration: 5 minutes**

1. Find a quiet space. If possible, have the following nearby:

A glass or bowl of water, a candle (optional), a cushion to support your body

- Place the water in front of you. If you are pregnant, place one hand on your belly. If you are in the postnatal stage, place a hand on your heart or on your belly.
- Take three deep breaths. As you exhale, imagine your body softening, like still water, and say this intention/affirmation (aloud or silently):
- “I remember water as support, as ancestral memory and as loving care.”

Somatic Exercise: Aquatic Breathing **Duration: 5–7 minutes**

2. This exercise helps regulate the nervous system and create a sense of security.

- Inhale slowly through your nose while counting to 4.
- Exhale through your mouth counting to 6, as if you were gently blowing on water.
- As you inhale, imagine the water entering, cool and soothing.
- As you exhale, allow the water to carry away tension, fear or tiredness.
- If you are pregnant, imagine that the water surrounds and protects your baby.
If you are postpartum, imagine that the water supports your body and your heart.
- It allows for gentle rocking or movement of the body if desired.

Bath or Gentle Cleansing **Duration: 10–15 minutes**

3. This ritual can be done in the shower, foot bath or with a warm cloth.

- Mindful bathing: As the water falls, slowly repeat this affirmation:
“Just as water cleanses me, it also sets me free.”

- **Gentle cleanse:**

- Soak a cloth in warm water (you can add chamomile or lavender).
- Pass the cloth over your arms, neck and belly (or heart), with slow movements.
- Imagine that the water collects what you no longer need to carry.
- Choose the affirmations that resonate most with you and repeat them 3 times:
 - ***My body knows how to care for itself and how to heal.***
 - ***I am sustained by the wisdom of my ancestors.***
 - ***I allow rest to be part of the healing process.***
 - ***The water reminds me that I am not alone.***
 - ***My process is valid, sacred and sufficient.***

Postnatal Integration: Bonding and Containment **Duration: 5 minutes**

4. If your baby is with you, place him/her near or on your chest.

- Breathe together for a few moments.
- Place one hand on your heart and the other on the baby's body and whisper (or think):
“We are safe. We are supported. We are learning together.”
- Be grateful to the water.
- Drink some of the water from the bowl, if you wish, as an act of integration.

Closing:

5. Repeat this affirmation of gratitude: “I honor the water that gave me life and that sustains me today.”

Suggestions for Daily Life: Drink water with intention every morning, take mindful showers of 2–3 minutes, listen to water sounds to fall asleep

ACTIVITY

MAKE YOUR OWN AROMATIC APPLICATOR AND SIMMER POT BUNDLE

Aromatherapy diffuser

Use essential oils like lavender or eucalyptus to create a relaxing atmosphere at home. Aromas can have a powerful impact on mood. If you don't have a diffuser, boil some water and add a few essential oils, cinnamon, lemons, rosemary or your favorite combination to uplift your mood.

Essential oil recommendations

To relax: lavender.

For sleep: chamomile.

For meditation: orange.

For anxiety: sandalwood.

For stress: sage.

To lift your spirits: Lemon.

To Diffuse: bergamot.

For topical use: Rose.



Aromatic Roll-on Applicator

Ingredients:

Roll-on applicator. Olive oil, or another vegetable oil of your choice. Essential aroma oils such as lavender, lemon, rosemary, mint...

Instructions:

Fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of the applicator with olive oil. Add 10 drops of aromatic oil. Put the ball on to cover the applicator and mix.

Now apply it and enjoy!

Simmer Pot Recipes

Apple cider aroma:

Boil water and add at least two apple peels, one or more cinnamon sticks, slice of orange or orange peels and three or more whole cloves, then let it boil for 5 minutes and reduce heat to let it simmer.

Forest/clean scent:

Boil water and add at least five bay leaves, three sprigs of rosemary and a few slices of lemon and let bring to a boil for 5 minutes then let it simmer.



CEREMONIAL CACAO

ANCESTRAL CONNECTION, HEART OPENER, AND NERVOUS SYSTEM NURTURER

The cacao ceremony is a slow and intentional practice, rooted in the ancestral wisdom of the indigenous peoples of Latin America, especially in Mesoamerica, where cacao has long been honored as a sacred plant used for healing, connection and community care.

For generations, cacao has been shared in ceremonies to support emotional balance, strengthen the heart and restore harmony within the body and spirit, especially during times of transition, grief or collective stress.

When approached with care and consent, ceremonial cacao can offer a gentle way to calm the nervous system, inviting feelings of warmth, safety and grounding. This practice honors the understanding that healing occurs in relationships: with ourselves, with each other and with the ancestors who came before us. You are invited to participate in this ritual in a supportive way, at your own pace, honoring your lived experiences and cultural roots.

Unlike commercial chocolate, these ceremonies use ceremonial grade cacao, which is a 100% pure, organic and minimally processed cacao paste or powder to preserve its active compounds.

But we understand that sometimes it's hard to find and is pricey, therefore, what's important is the respect, gratitude and intention you put into the chocolate you prepare that is within your means.

Cacao ceremonies have become popular as a wellness practice to support:

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Cacao is rich in flavonoids that support circulation and heart vitality.
- **Emotional Balance:** Helps reduce mental noise, allowing you to better listen to the needs of your body and emotions.
- **Community Connection:** Fosters a safe space for vulnerability and empathy among attendees.

The ceremonies are usually led by facilitators and last between one and three hours. It's important to set a personal intention before drinking the cacao to guide the introspective experience.



Next we will guide you through your own ceremony.

CACAO GUIDED INTENTION AND REFLECTION

HONORING THE ANCESTORS

Before drinking the cacao, take a moment to prepare your body. If you feel comfortable, place one hand on your heart and the other on your abdomen. Breathe slowly a few times, allowing yourself to fully experience this moment.

Silently or aloud, establish this intention:

"I invite the, love and protection of my ancestors. I honor their paths, their resilience and the journeys they undertook to be here today. May this moment bring remembrance, comfort and strength to my heart and my nervous system."

As you drink the cacao imagine its warmth gently spreading across your chest, soothing areas that feel heavy or tense. You can reflect on the following suggestions, choosing one or letting them flow naturally:

- What strengths or values have been passed down to me through my ancestors? (In difficult or joyful times)
- How has resilience emerged in my family or lineage?
- What kind of comfort or support do I want to receive right now?

There is no right or wrong way to experience this practice. You may feel emotions, memories, calm or simply presence. All responses are welcome. Allow yourself to receive whatever feels nourishing, knowing that you carry ancestral strength within you.

You can develop a ritual where you give yourself individual time to relax and disconnect from the stress of the day, or you can share it with loved ones to nurture your soul and feel the warm embrace that your ancestors give to your heart to bring you relief.



Are you up for trying it?

SESSION 5: WIND

STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY

The wind embodies communication, breath and connection. Ancestral traditions have also recognized it as a healing force through sound and vibration. In many Latin American cultures, sound — such as singing, drumming, flutes, prayers and ceremonial chants — has been used to convey messages, release emotions and strengthen community bonds.

This session focuses on cultivating supportive relationships, conscious communication and collective healing, recognizing that sound travels like the wind and reminds us that we do not heal in isolation. Through breathwork, sound healing, group dialogues and collaborative activities, the importance of community as a space of support, belonging and shared resilience in the healing process is reinforced.



Enjoy the sound bath offered during the session or when you're at home on YouTube. Here are some from our facilitator, Martin Espino, Ceremonial Traditional Musician (handcrafted indigenous instruments by Martin Espino shown above).

Part 1: https://youtu.be/0kCpfTS_UJs?si=Xn_sXEHUK217jbAH

Part 2: https://youtu.be/0kCpfTS_UJs?si=ZjuKZxfMTd0liITR

Instructions and Reflection

- Before you start listening, do a body scan and notice how your body, mind and breathing feel so you can compare at the end.
- What differences do you notice in your body, mind or breathing after the bath?
- What did you feel during the bath? Did you cry, fall asleep or find your inner peace?

We encourage you to use the medicine that music provides; explore on YouTube or in your community for local facilitators who offer these services near you.

BREATHWORK

CALMING THE BODY AND CREATING CONNECTION

Breathwork is a simple yet powerful practice that helps calm the nervous system and create a sense of safety and connection within the body. When we experience stress, trauma or ongoing uncertainty, our breathing often becomes shallow or rapid without us even realizing it. By bringing awareness back to the breath, we can gently signal to the body that it is safe to slow down. Breathwork has been used in various cultures and ancient traditions as a tool for grounding, healing and regulating emotions. In this practice, there is no "right" way to breathe — only an invitation to notice, soften and reconnect with yourself at your own pace. It is recommended that you practice these exercises in ways that feel supportive and stop or adjust at any time.

Alternate nostril breathing (Nadi Shodhana)



Sit comfortably with your spine straight.

- Use your right thumb to close your right nostril.
- Inhale deeply through your left nostril.
- Close your left nostril with your right ring finger.
- Release your right nostril and exhale through it.
- Inhale through your right nostril.
- Close your right nostril, release your left nostril and exhale through it.
- Repeat this cycle, concentrating on the flow of your breath.

Abdominal breathing to anchor

This breathing technique promotes relaxation and helps the body to exit stress mode.

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Put one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
- Inhale slowly through your nose, allowing your belly to rise.
- Exhale gently through your mouth, letting your belly drop.

Continue for 2–5 minutes, focusing on slow, steady breathing.



Box breathing

- Inhale while counting to 4.
- Hold your breath while counting to 4.
- Exhale while counting to 4.
- Hold your breath while counting to 4.
- Repeat the cycle, gradually extending the count if you feel comfortable.



Heart-centered breathing (connection and comfort)

This breathing supports emotional warmth and self-compassion.

- Put a hand over your heart.
- Inhale slowly, imagining the breath moving into your heart space.
- Exhale gently, imagining the warmth spreading through your chest.
- With each breath, I silently said, "I am safe in this moment."

Continue for 2–4 minutes.

Conscious breath counting

- Take a deep breath, counting "one" in your mind.
- Exhale completely, counting to two.
- Continue this count to ten, then start the count again at one.

If your mind wanders, gently bring your focus back to the account.

REMEMBERING COMMUNITY AS MEDICINE

Our ancestors understood that healing was never meant to happen alone. In many Indigenous and Latin cultures, wellbeing was rooted in collective care, shared responsibility and deep connection with one another. Community was — and continues to be — a source of strength, protection, wisdom and resilience. In times of hardship, people gathered to share stories, prepare food together, sing, pray, grieve and celebrate. These acts were not merely social; they were healing. Reconnecting with community today is a way to remember ancestral teachings and honor the truth that support, belonging and shared humanity help regulate our nervous systems and restore hope.

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY FOR COLLECTIVE HEALING AND RESILIENCE

You can start with something accessible and safe for you. The community doesn't have to be large or formal; it can begin with a connection built on trust.

- **Create or join small connection circles:** this could be a weekly walk, a coffee meeting, a prayer group or a healing circle where people can listen and be heard without judgment.
- **Share stories and lived wisdom:** Invite conversations about family history, migration journeys or lessons passed down by elders. Storytelling keeps ancestral knowledge alive and strengthens bonds.
- **Practice collective rituals:** Light a candle together, share a meal, listen to music, sing, practice breathing exercises or honor important dates. Simple rituals remind us that we belong.
- **Offer and receive support:** Community resilience grows when care flows both ways. Ask for help when you need it and offer your presence when others are struggling.
- **Participating in mutual service or aid:** Helping each other through food distribution, childcare, or protection reflects ancestral values of reciprocity and shared survival.
- **Reconnect with cultural spaces:** Cultural events, language groups, spiritual spaces or community organizations can be powerful places for healing and reconnection.



COMMUNITY MAPPING ACTIVITY

RECONNECTING WITH SUPPORT

This activity helps you identify sources of connection and support in your life. Go slowly and only include what feels safe.

Instructions:

- Draw a circle in the center of the page and write "Me" inside.
- Around it, draw additional circles for people, groups or places that offer you support (family, friends, neighbors, spiritual spaces, cultural groups, co-workers, community organizations).
- Draw the circles that you feel more connected to closest to you; place more distant or emerging connections further away.
- Use arrows or symbols to show where support feels strong, growing or where you would like to have more connection.

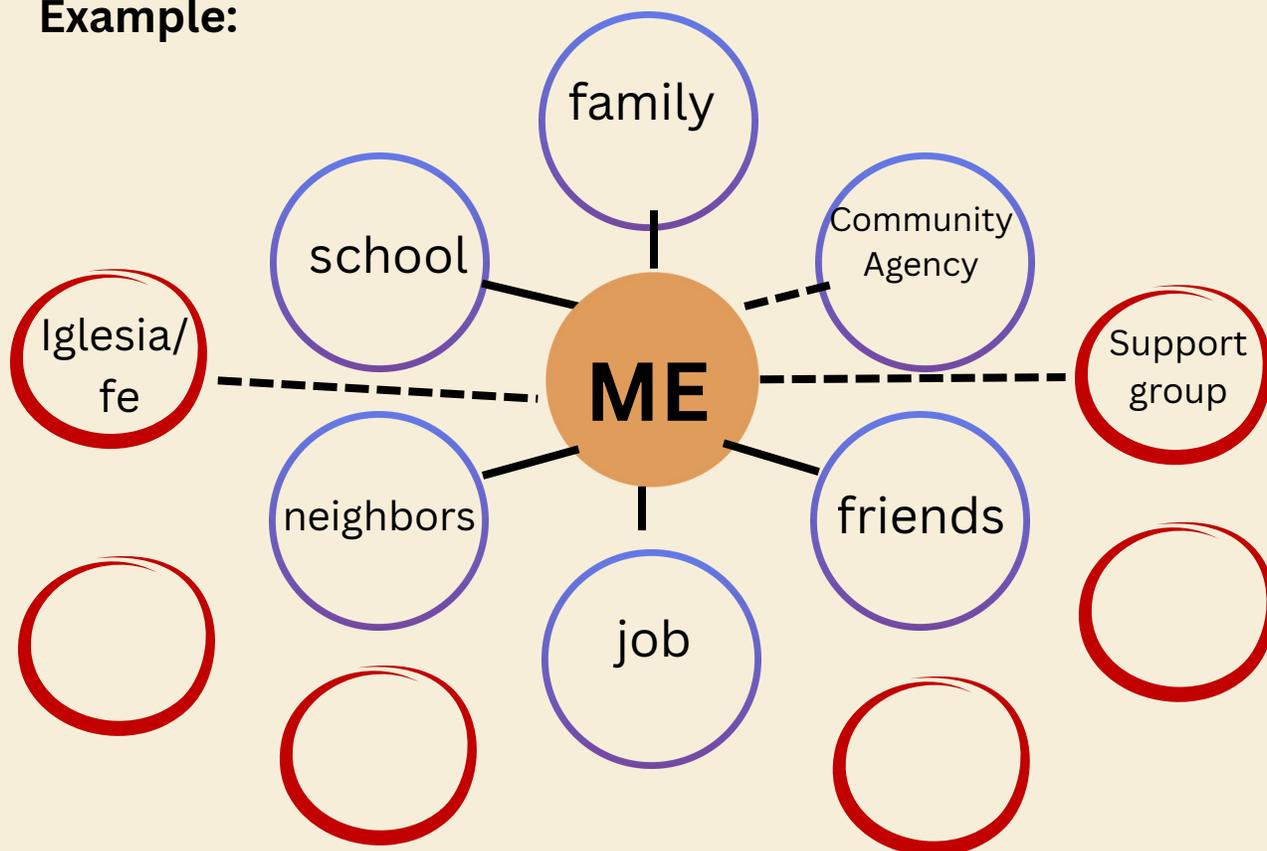
Points for reflection:

What connections are most nourishing for me right now?

Where do I feel like I belong or am safe?

What is one small step I can take to strengthen or rebuild my community this week?

Example:



SESSION 6: INTEGRATION OF THE ELEMENTS

This session invites you to reflect on everything you've explored throughout the series and to begin weaving the four elements — fire, earth, water and wind — into your daily life in ways that feel realistic, nourishing and meaningful. Our ancestors understood that wellbeing isn't something we practice only in times of crisis, but something we cultivate daily through intention, balance and community.

PREVENTION, LIFE STAGES, AND COPING TOOLS

Wellbeing and prevention differ throughout life. In this part of the workshop, we explore how stress, transitions and responsibilities can manifest at different life stages — such as youth, adulthood, parenthood, caregiving and aging — and how early awareness and supportive practices can prevent burnout, emotional overload and disengagement.

Let's review practical coping tools based on both ancestral wisdom and contemporary mental health practices, including:

- **Fire (Mind):** setting boundaries, motivation, emotional expression and meaning creation
- **Earth (Body):** anchoring, rest, food, movement and routine
- **Water (Soul/Emotions):** emotional release, self-compassion, grief care and flexibility
- **Wind (Community/Connection):** breathing, communication, sound and social support

This is an opportunity to observe patterns, growth and ideas that have emerged throughout the series. Community wisdom is honored here: your voice and lived experience matter.

REFLECTION:

- What element seems strongest to me in life right now?
- What elements were most present in your childhood, adolescence, adulthood, fatherhood and role as a caregiver to another person?
- Which one seems to need more care?
- How has my mind, body, soul and sense of community changed during these workshops?
- What ancestral practices or teachings do I want to continue?

You are encouraged to take what resonates with you, adapt the practices to your needs, and progress at your own pace. Healing is not linear, and balance is different for everyone.

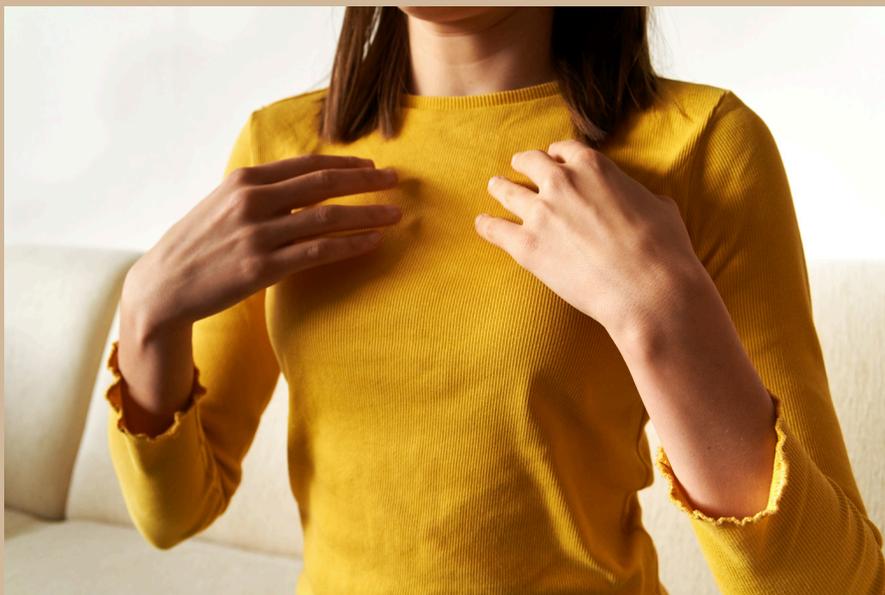
ENERGY MEDICINE TOOLS

In this session, you are invited to explore energy healing practices as gentle tools to support emotional balance, relieve stress and regulate the nervous system. Many ancestral healing traditions in Latin America and Indigenous cultures have long recognized that emotions, stress and trauma reside not only in the mind but also in the body and energy field. Practices such as EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) and Reiki offer ways to release intense emotions, restore balance and create a sense of protection and grounding. You are encouraged to participate in these practices at your own pace and choose what feels most supportive.

EFT (EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE) TO CALM STRESS AND HEAVY EMOTIONS

EFT, also known as tapping, is a gentle practice that combines light tapping with your fingertips on specific points on your body while you focus on your emotions and offer yourself words of validation and care. This technique can help calm your nervous system, release emotional tension and reconnect you with a sense of inner safety.

You can practice EFT at any time: upon waking, before going to sleep, after a difficult day or whenever you feel stressed, anxious or emotionally burdened.



REIKI

Reiki is a calming practice that channels universal life energy (Reiki) through the practitioner's hands to the recipient, seeking to balance the body. It is based on energy that promotes deep relaxation and emotional restoration. During Reiki, you may experience warmth, tranquility or a sense of peace as the body is invited into a state of healing. Reiki honors the body's natural ability to heal and can help release stress, restore emotional balance and create space for renewal.

How does it work?

- **Energy channeling:** The therapist acts as a channel for universal energy, directing it to the areas where it is needed.
- **Gentle touch:** The hands are placed in different positions on the body, without pressing, to transfer energy.
- **Energy balance:** It is believed that energy imbalances or blockages cause illness, and Reiki helps to restore the normal flow of energy.
- **Combination of healing tools:** Sometimes it is combined with aromatherapy, crystals, mindfulness and sound healing (crystal or Tibetan bowls, sound bath).



Reminder:

There is no single "right" way to experience energy healing. Some people notice immediate changes, while others notice subtle changes over time. All experiences are valid. You are always in control and can pause or modify any practice as needed. These tools are offered to support your wellbeing, resilience and sense of security.

LET'S PRACTICE

Before you begin, find a quiet place if possible. You can sit or stand. Take a few deep breaths and remember: you can pause or adapt this practice at any time.
Simple EFT (Tapping) Script

1. **Preparation Point** (edge of the hand) With two or three fingers, gently tap the edge of one hand (below the little finger) while repeating this phrase 3 times: **“Even though I’m feeling stressed/anxious/heavy emotionally right now, I accept myself and offer myself compassion.”**

(You can change the words to reflect what you feel.)

2. **Tapping Sequence** Gently tap (5–7 times) on each point while repeating the suggested phrase or a similar one that resonates with you.

- Top of the head:
“This stress I’m under.”
- Eyebrow start:
“These accumulated emotions.”
- Side of the eye:
“Everything my body has been holding up.”
- Under the eye:
“I recognize how I feel.”
- Under the nose:
“I don’t have to carry everything alone.”
- Chin:
“I’m giving myself permission to let go a little.”
- Clavicle:
“I invite calm to my body.”
- Under the arm:
“I am safe right now.”



Take a deep breath at the end of the round. You can repeat the sequence 2–3 times, adjusting the phrases as needed.

3. **Closing with Intention:** Place one hand over your heart and breathe slowly.

Repeat softly or silently:

“My body knows how to heal. I offer myself patience, care, and love.”

ART AS AN ANCIENT HEALING TOOL

Since ancient times, the Indigenous peoples of Latin America have used art as medicine to heal, remember and resist. Through weaving, ceramics, painting, murals, dance, music and symbols, our ancestors expressed emotions, told stories, honored the earth and strengthened community life. Art was not just decoration; it was a form of spiritual communication, a way to release pain, celebrate life and sustain themselves collectively in difficult times.

Today, reconnecting with art as a healing practice is a way to remember that ancient wisdom. Creating with our hands can help calm the nervous system, release emotions that sometimes lack words and generate a sense of presence and security in the body. It's not about "doing it right" or creating something perfect, but about allowing expression to flow with honesty and compassion.

ART, RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY

When you create art, you don't do it alone. You are engaging in dialogue with generations who used creativity to survive, resist and heal. Sharing art in community reminds us that we are not alone in our experiences and that healing is multiplied when it is collective. Every creative act is an affirmation of life, a form of resilience and a bridge to personal and communal wellbeing.

Remember:
Your creativity is medicine. By honoring it, you honor your history, your body and your community.



HOW TO INCORPORATE ART INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE TO HEAL AND REGULATE YOUR BODY

- **Draw or paint to express emotions:** Use colors, shapes or symbols to represent how you feel. Let your body guide the movement.
- **Take Photos:** Taking photographs of nature, or other interests, helps to find calm, and sharing them helps to create a sense of connection and community.
- **Write or create poetry:** Writing words, phrases or letters can help you process experiences, grief and hopes.
- **Work with natural materials:** Clay, seeds, leaves or fabrics connect the body with the earth and support emotional regulation.
- **Create artistic rituals:** Light a candle, listen to ancient or soft music and create with intention for a few minutes.
- **Share in community:** Creating art with other people — in circles, workshops, social networks or at home — strengthens connection, belonging and collective healing.

ACTIVITY

CREATING WITH THE FOUR ELEMENTS EXPRESSION, BALANCE AND HEALING

This activity invites you to create using the wisdom of the four elements – fire, earth, water and wind. Each element represents a different way of feeling, releasing and supporting yourself. No artistic experience is necessary; trust your body and your intuition.

Materials

Paper, pencils, colored pencils, markers or crayons (Optional), soft music, a candle or incense

Step 1: Prepare the Body and Space (Wind – Breathing)

Sit comfortably and take three slow breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. Feel the air going in and out, bringing calm to your body.

Repeat silently:

“I breathe, I connect and I prepare to create.”

Step 2: Connect with the Emotion (Water – Feeling)

Ask yourself gently:

What emotions are flowing through me today? What needs to be expressed or moved forward?

Allow emotions to surface without judgment, like flowing water.

Step 3: Creative Expression (Fire – Action)

Begin to create. Use colors, lines, words or symbols to express what's inside. Let the fire guide you with intention and energy. If intensity arises, remember that fire also transforms.

Step 4: Support and Shape (Earth – Stability)

Observe your creation and add elements that represent support, roots or protection.

Perhaps solid shapes, earth colors or symbols of strength.

Feel how the earth supports you as you create.

Step 5: Integrate and Honor (All Elements)

Place one hand on your creation and the other on your heart. Breathe deeply.

Recognize how the four elements live within you and accompany you. Repeat softly or silently, “I honor my emotions, my strength, my roots and my capacity to heal.”

Reflection:

What element did I feel most present in my creative process? Which one do I need to integrate more into my daily life? What does this creation teach me about my resilience?

Remember:

Creating from the elements is an act of collective memory and healing. Each stroke honors those who used creativity to resist, heal and sustain their community. Your expression is valuable and forms part of a larger tapestry.

SESSION 7: CELEBRATION

CELEBRATION AS ANCESTRAL MEDICINE

In Latin and Indigenous cultures, celebration has always been a form of healing. Our ancestors gathered not only in times of joy, but also in moments of sorrow, transition, harvest, birth and remembrance. Celebrations – whether large parties or small family gatherings – were ways to release stress, strengthen bonds and remind each other that no one lives life alone. Music, food, laughter, ritual and storytelling helped regulate the nervous system, restore hope and create meaning in both difficult and joyful times. Maintaining the tradition of gathering and celebrating is an act of resilience and remembrance. In a world that often promotes isolation and productivity, choosing to come together is a way to honor the ancient teachings that wellbeing is rooted in connection, presence and shared humanity.



CELEBRATIONS THROUGH THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Celebrations naturally intertwine the four elements and the pillars of self-care, supporting balance and healing:

Fire (Mind and Spirit): Candles, cooking, dancing, and intention ignite joy, motivation, creativity and purpose. Fire reminds us of our inner light and resilience. Joy, meaning and positive memories help reduce stress and strengthen emotional resilience.

Earth (Body): Sharing food, resting together, touching the earth and creating decorations anchors us to the body and supports nourishment, security and stability. Movement, rest, food and laughter help regulate the nervous system.

Water (Emotions and Soul): Tears, laughter, music and movement allow emotions to flow and be released. Water supports emotional expression, healing and renewal. Ritual, music and cultural practices reconnect us with our ancestors and our life purpose.

Wind (Community and Connection): Conversations, singing, breathwork, prayers and sound travel like the wind, strengthening communication, a sense of belonging and collective care. Gathering fosters trust, support and collective healing.

INCORPORATING CELEBRATION INTO DAILY LIFE

Celebration doesn't have to be elaborate. It can be simple and intentional:

- Sharing a meal with others
- Playing music and dancing for a few minutes
- Honoring birthdays, achievements, special days or cultural traditions.
- Creating rituals of gratitude or remembrance
- Laughing, telling stories or spending time together outdoors

Every moment of celebration is a reminder that joy is not separate from healing: it is part of it.

Reflection

- How did my ancestors celebrate life, even in times of hardship?
- What simple ways can I invite more celebration and connection into my life?
- What aspect of self-care do I feel most strongly when I celebrate?
Which one do I want to take the most care of?



Remember:

When you celebrate, you continue a line of survival, love and collective care. Joy, when shared, becomes medicine.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Thank you for completing Roots and Wings and giving yourself this time.



ROOTS AND WINGS TEAM

RESOURCES

211 LA County – Free referrals to mental health, food, housing, legal assistance and more.
Call: 2-1-1 (24/7) | Text your zip code to 898-211
Services in English/Spanish; Best for up-to-date local listings.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Helpline

Telephone: (800) 854-7771 (24/7)
Free crisis support, referrals, multilingual assessments.

One Degree (Online Directory) <https://www.1degree.org/>
Find local food distribution, CalFresh support, meal programs.

NATIONAL CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINES (USA)

Mental Health and Emotional Crises

National Suicide Prevention and Crisis Line – 988

Call or text: 988 (24/7)

Website: <https://988lifeline.org>

Free and confidential emotional support for people experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, or mental health crises. Care in Spanish is available.

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Website: <https://www.crisistextline.org>

Immediate support via text message. Ideal for people who prefer not to talk on the phone.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Helpline Phone: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)

Website: <https://www.nami.org>

Peer support, information and referrals to mental health services.

SAMHSA National Helpline (Mental Health and Substance Use)

Phone: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Website: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

Free and confidential referrals for mental health and substance use treatment. Spanish-speaking services available.

S.A.F.E. Alternatives (Self-Harm Support)

Phone: 1-800-366-8288

Website: <https://www.selfinjury.com>

Support for people who self-harm or want to stop.

Domestic Violence and Abuse National Domestic Violence Hotline

Phone: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) TTY: 1-800-787-3224

Website: <https://www.thehotline.org>

24/7 support in Spanish and over 200 other languages. Online chat available.

NATIONAL CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINES (USA)

(CONTINUED)

Sexual Assault and Child Abuse National Sexual Assault Hotline – RAINN

Phone: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Website: <https://www.rainn.org>

Confidential support for survivors of sexual assault. Online chat available.

Childhelp – National Child Abuse

Hotline Phone: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

Website: <https://www.childhelphotline.org>

Support and intervention in cases of child abuse.

Veterans Crisis Line

Phone: Dial 988 and press 1 Text: 838255

Website: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net> Notes:

Confidential support for veterans, family members and friends.

Trans Lifeline

Phone: 1-877-565-8860

Website: <https://www.translifeline.org> Notes: Line staffed by trans people for emotional and community support.

National Human Trafficking Hotline

Phone: 1-888-373-7888 Text: 233733

Website: <https://humantraffickinghotline.org>

♦ Important Notes for Participants All these lines are free and confidential.

Many offer service in Spanish and other languages.

You can call even if you are not sure you need help.

**For local resources for food, mental health, housing or legal support,
call 211 or visit One Degree.**

COMMUNITY HEALERS LIST

Dani Solorio 424-704-3413	Compton Health Bar	Wilmington	Herbalism-Limpias
Dr. Patty On IG	Wild Luna Botanicals	East LA	Limpias- Self-care Remedies
Christina Mosqueda On IG	Manos Ancestrales	Long Beach & Norwalk	Limpias-Womb Healing
Blanca Estrella On IG	Moon Leaf	Hawthorne	Womb healing
Irelia Ozaeta On IG	Cosmic Rose Apothecary	South Gate	Herbal Remedies- Limpias
Christy On IG	SomaLuna Wellness	Watts & Cudahy	Yoga-Pilates-Personal Coaching- Sound Baths
Ehiliana and Natalie Guerrero On IG	310 Bruja Magic	Compton	Reiki and Art Therapy - Sound Bath
Addana Kenlow On IG	Back to One Wellness	Long Beach	Reiki & aromatherapy
Jessica De Leon 424-273-4742	Ayamluz Wellness	West LA	Acupuncture
Angelica online	Feel to Heal	Downey	Reiki
Jenny On IG	The Wellness Connection	Long Beach	Herbalism-Pilates
Jenneka Romero 626-602-0858	Sagrado Espacio Wellness	Pomona	Massage Therapy & Womb Healing
Sasha Crossman On IG	Minding My Own Mental	South Gate	Nervous System Reset Massage Therapy & Yoga & Sound Bath
Veronica Rodriguez On IG	Vero_c77	Montebello	Family Constellations - Meditation
Victor On IG	Solistiko_healingmassage_sesh	South Gate	Massage Therapist- Ancestral Healing
Amanda Guevara On IG	The Phoenix Rise Project	Long Beach	Sound Healing, Community wellness
Milagros Ruiz Bello On IG	Conamormilagros	Long Beach	Limpias, Medicine Bags, Sound drum healing, Voice activation

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Ehliana Guerrero, Reiki Master,
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Matrin Espino, Aztec Sound Bath Facilitator
Milagros Ruiz Bello, Cacao Ceremony Facilitator
Rising Heartbeats Drum Circle- Drum Circle Facilitators

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Legal notice:

The opinions and content expressed in this guide are those of the creators and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and the USCC Latino Department.

Community recognition:

We honor ancestral wisdom, lived experiences and community voices that informed this work. This guide was created in the spirit of collective healing, cultural humility and community care.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH**
hope. recovery. wellbeing.



Phoenix Rise Project

