



BLACK SEL + SELF LOVE HOW TO BUILD BELONGING FROM THE INSIDE OUT



OVERVIEW

Practicing radical self-love is what Elena Aguilar names as the ability to decolonize emotions. Our emotions are influenced by culture, distorted by dominant narratives, but we have the power to adopt more liberating beliefs about them. At the Hunter College Collaborative for Social Emotional Learning and Leading (C-SELL), we center love by building belonging from the inside out. In partnership with the NYC Department of Education and Awareness in Motion, we work with school teams intergenerationally in Harlem to co-create and transform school cultures into places of belonging where positive school-wide outcomes intersect with individual well-being, collective well-being, and equity. In this session, we will explore **Black Self-Concept** and **Critical Consciousness**. Participants will experience heARTful dialogue using creative expression with visual arts and movement as a way to decolonize their emotions and tend to their emotional garden.

A KEY STEP TOWARD RECLAIMING OUR LIBERATION AS BLACK PEOPLE IS TO REJECT THE ILLUSION OF SCARCITY IN OUR MINDS AND RELATIONSHIPS.

WHAT ARE THE STORIES WE'VE BEEN TOLD? WHAT ARE THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES?

BUILDING BELONGING IN K-12 SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND OUR COMMUNITIES LOOKS LIKE STARTING WITH SELF. WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE CHANGE ON THE OUTSIDE IF IT'S THE SAME AS WHAT WE DO ON THE INSIDE. ESSENTIALLY, **WHAT WE MARGINALIZE INSIDE, WE MARGINALIZE OUTSIDE.**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

THE BEHAVIOR OF TEARING DOWN ON THE INSIDE IS REPEATED AND MODELED ON THE OUTSIDE. EVEN IN OUR BODY LANGUAGE, WE WALK AROUND AND MODEL THE BEHAVIOR OF OPEN AND CLOSED. OUR GOAL IN OUR WORK TOGETHER IS LEARNING HOW TO MOVE IN THE SPACES BETWEEN CONTRACTING AND OPENING.

SELF-LOVE LOOKS LIKE TENDERLY INVITING IN EMOTIONS AND ENGAGING IN AN EMBODIMENT PRACTICE TO PAUSE, FEEL, AND CHOOSE OUR INTENTION. GROUNDING IN THE PRACTICE THAT LIFE IS NOT WHAT HAPPENS TO US, BUT HOW WE RESPOND TO IT. **THIS IS LIBERATION.**