



Spiritually Grounded and Trauma-Informed Facilitation

with Marchaé Grair



Part 1: What is facilitation and how can it be trauma-informed?

Part 2: How can I be a spiritually grounded facilitator?



Marchaé (they/she/marchaé)

Black

Nonbinary

Polyamorous

Queer

Anxious

Spiritual but
unaffiliated

Lineages



Christian Formation



**People-Powered
Justice Movements**



**Black
Creatives/Writers**

Also about me...

I am a **writer** because

- ...giving and receiving stories is sacred.
- ...(re)claiming narratives is a way to name and own my power.

I am a **spiritual director** because

- ...spiritual journeys can be lonely and confusing if you take the journey alone.

I am a **teacher & facilitator** because

- ...I enjoy creating space for other grassroots spiritual caregivers through my work.

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What is facilitation?

Making space and **creating containers** that **support** people being **as present and empowered as possible** for conversations, work, or community processes.

So What Does a Facilitator Do?



Making Space

- Asking questions/follow-up questions and summarizing what's happening in the room.
- Slowing down moments that would otherwise be rushed. (Conflict, celebration, curiosity.)



Creating Containers

- Naming and co-creating norms and community guidelines for being in the space.
- Designing activities, games, prompts, etc. that create equity in processing and engaging a topic or conversation.



Helping People Be Present and Empowered


- Creating time for community and small group check-ins so people can bring their real lives into the room.
- Creating lots of time for breaks and self-care.
 - Receiving and responding to feedback and group needs.



Teaching vs. Facilitation

Teaching: Focus on sharing a skill, concept, or approach, often in service of people applying that knowledge in a specific way.

Facilitation: Focus on helping individuals and groups to determine their own needs and to excavate their own knowledge.



What is **trauma-informed** facilitation?

Making space and containers that prioritize the needs of folks who have experienced (or are experiencing) harm or ruptures in their lives or community.

Why do spiritual communities need trauma-informed facilitation?



Embodiment of values

Creating loving, accountable environments lets people know you are who you say you are.

Facilitating can move interactions from transactional to relational.



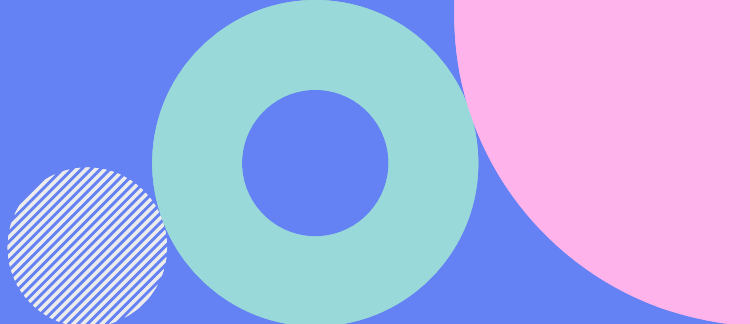
Facilitation as care

In a world where people feel lonely and disengaged, facilitation can help people feel known.



Shifting power dynamics

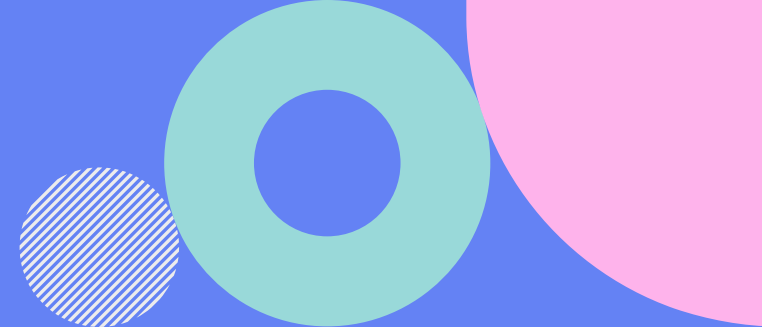
Facilitators can create more equitable spaces by prioritizing the needs of people most impacted by oppression and/or who have the least institutional power.



People most impacted by oppression (for reasons of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.) are experiencing ongoing, compounded traumas.

Centering the needs of people most impacted by oppression and white supremacy in your facilitation design is one way to create a trauma-informed environment.

How do I create a trauma-informed environment for people most impacted by oppression?



★ Honor the (cultural/political/social) moment with programming and content decisions.

1. Be prepared to change content and/or create more breaks or contemplative time if something difficult in the world is happening. (Shifting grounding quotes/activities, centering activities about grief/anger.)
2. Create easy/subtle ways for people to opt out of conversations that might be especially triggering.
 - a. *(Content warnings and a pause, leaving and emailing you, a buddy system to follow up with a classmate)*
3. Consider affinity groups/spaces for processing according to identity and experience.

How do I create a trauma-informed environment for people most impacted by oppression?

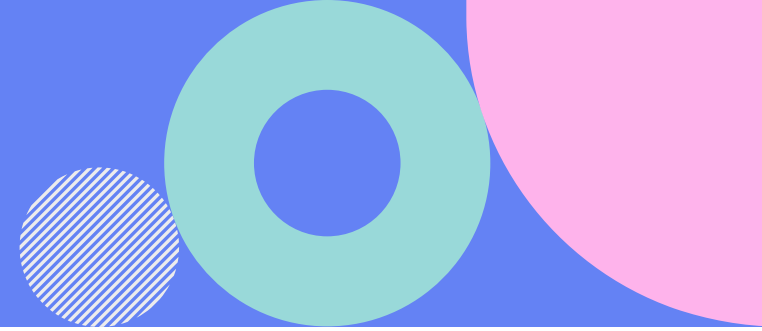
★ Distinguish between being unsafe and experiencing transformative discomfort.

Discomfort can generate similar feeling as trauma triggers. Cultivate the skill of noting the difference by:

1. “Moving at the speed of trust.”* You can’t move through “tough conversations” without establishing trust in the group, which takes time. If you don’t have the time, recalibrate for the amount of trust that exists within the group.
2. Create opportunities for mind/body connection work. (Deep breaths, meditation, etc.)
3. Progressive stack, invitations not to respond for people less impacted

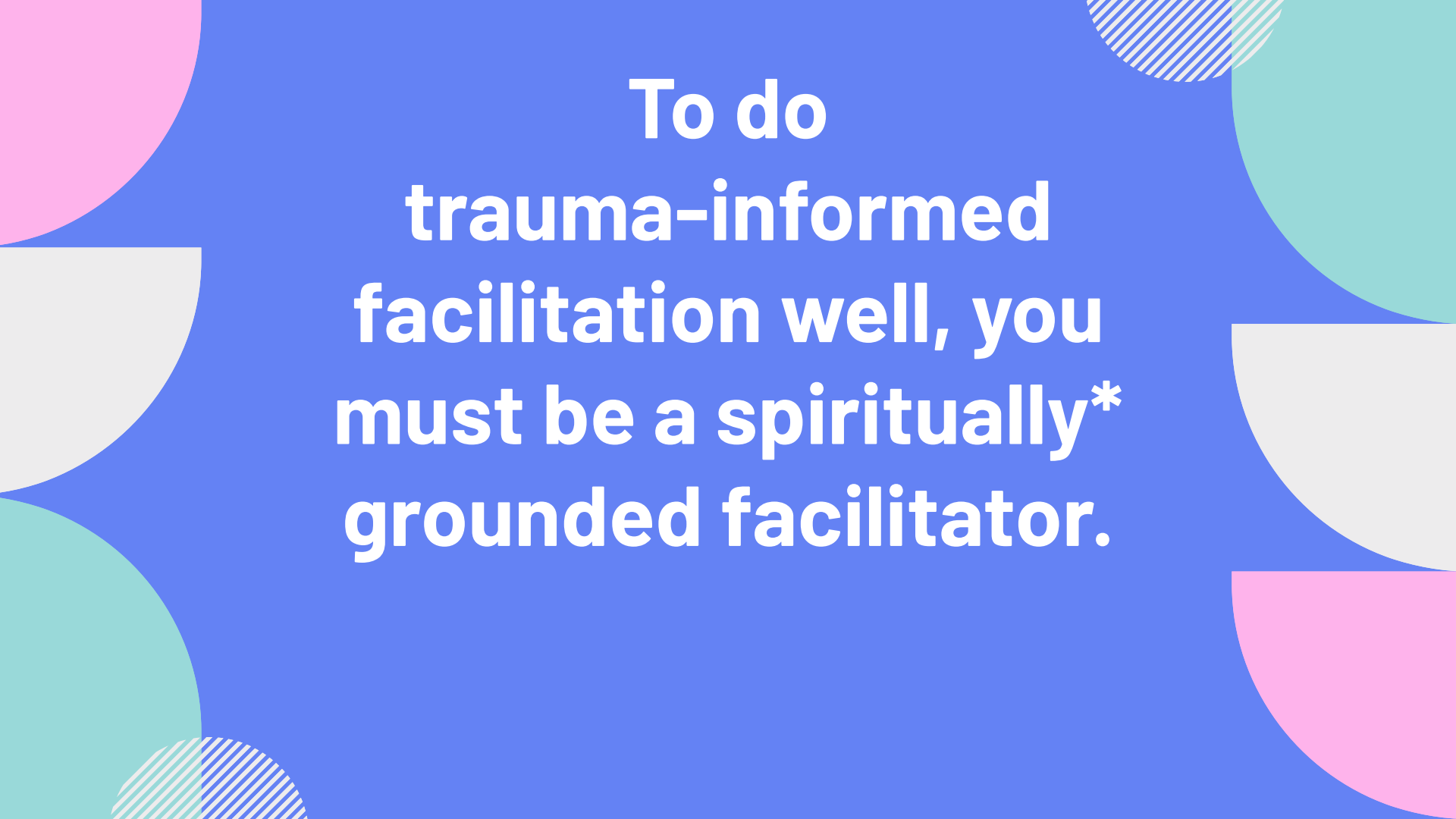
*Citation: “Moving at the speed of trust” (adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy)

How do I create a trauma-informed environment for people most impacted by oppression?



★ Find the joy

1. Everything cannot be all trauma, all of the time. Center wisdom of people impacted by oppression outside of their oppression
2. Music/shared playlists
3. Share “the stage” with participants whose new energy and wisdom can enliven the group.

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**To do
trauma-informed
facilitation well, you
must be a spiritually*
grounded facilitator.**

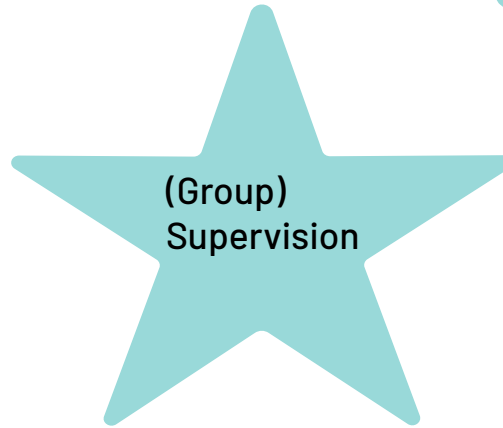
How to be a spiritually grounded facilitator



Find and engage a support system

Work on your stuff outside of your role to
avoid countertransference.

- ★ Spiritual director
- ★ Spiritual counselor/coach
- ★ Therapist
- ★ Peer group/Learning Community



How to be a spiritually grounded facilitator

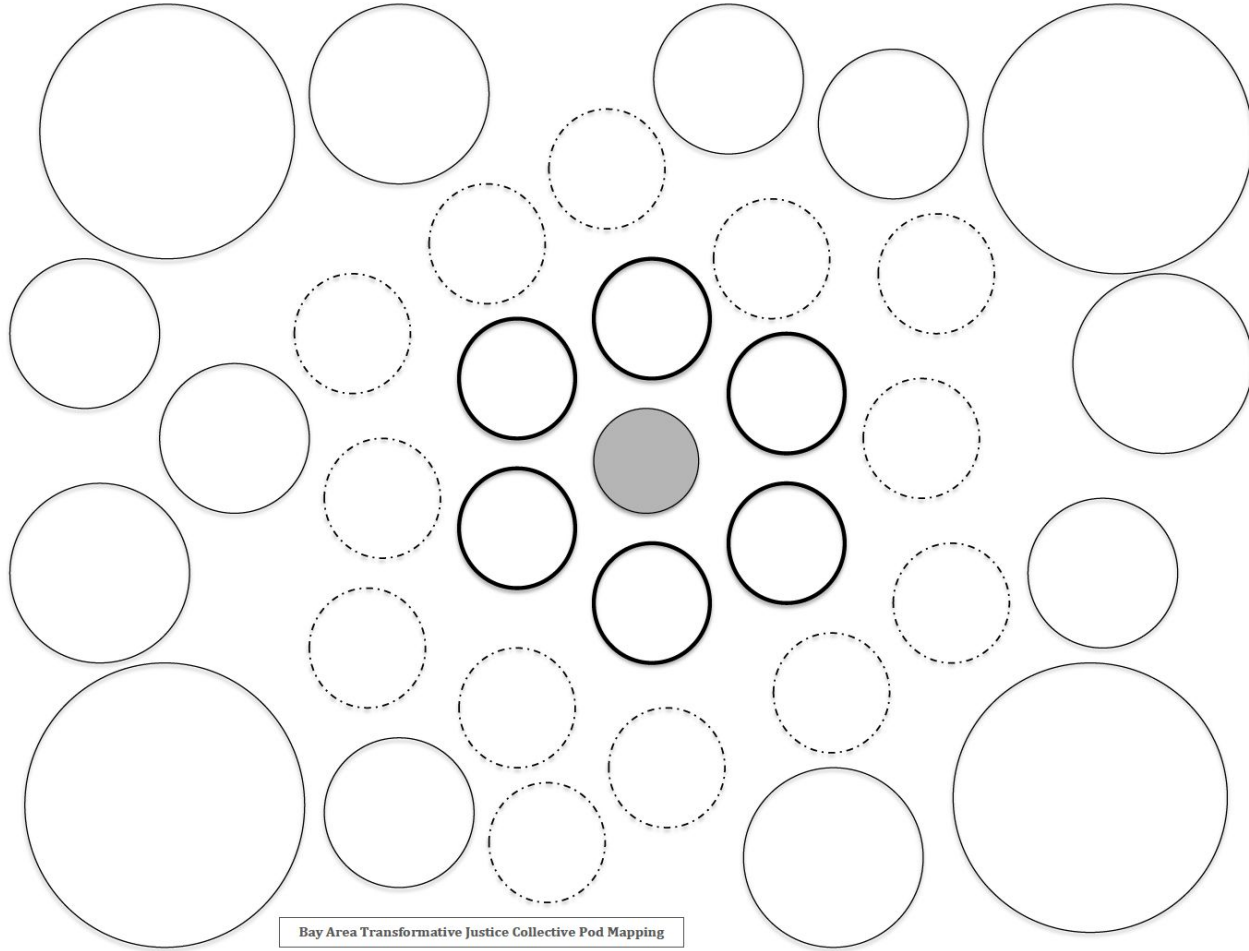


Be accountable

- ★ Who do I tell if I caused harm and needed support in moving toward repair?
- ★ What systems are in place where I facilitate to hold everyone (including me) accountable?



Pod mapping



Community Agreements

We commit ourselves to decolonizing our spiritual beliefs and practices by questioning notions that use spiritual teachings in support of oppression, domination, condemnation, control, extraction, and hate.

We are committed to being a community where all can thrive regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, age, economic status, disabilities, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status, or location.

We imperfectly embody collective liberation from white supremacy and racial capitalism. We commit to showing up in our spiritual lives and in our communities to the hard practice of creating a world free from racist violence.

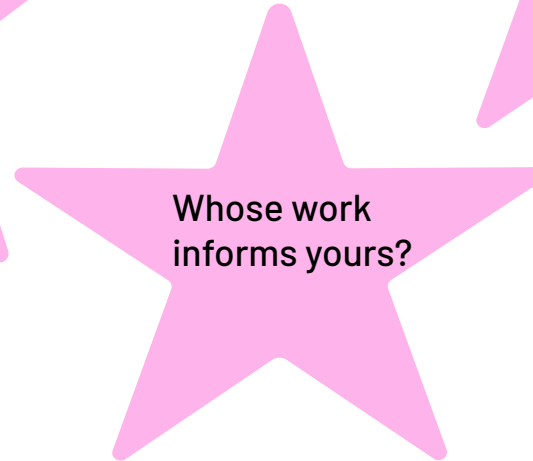
We create spiritual spaces beyond binaries and acknowledge the ways cisgender privilege and violence against transgender people have been toxically normalized in our spiritual lives. We work to dismantle those beliefs and actions within ourselves and the communities in which we belong.

How to be a spiritually grounded facilitator



Name and honor lineages

- ★ Spiritual lineages
- ★ Political Lineages
- ★ Ancestry



Lineages



Christian Formation

Church of God in Christ
(Pentecostal/Black Church)

United Church of Christ



People-Powered Movements & Practices

Black Liberation

Queer and Trans Liberation

Disability Justice

Abolition/Transformative Justice



Black Creatives/Writers

Maya Angelou

Toni Morrison

bell hooks

Thank You!

Website | Marchae.com

Twitter, Instagram |
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Facebook | [MarchaeG](https://www.facebook.com/MarchaeG)

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