

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

FESTIVAL OF HEALTH AND HEALING TO HOLD OVER 80 EVENTS ACROSS LONDON



A new cultural festival of community health and healing will hold over [80 events](#) across London, between **11 October and 11 November 2023**.

[“Rehearsing Freedoms”](#), a month-long programme organised by **Healing Justice Ldn**, with curatorial and production support from Kin Structures, will focus on politicised health, healing, movement-building, arts and culture, centring the experiences of marginalised and “global majority” people. Its title draws on the US activist-scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s [provocation](#) to “rehearse the social order coming into being” in order to build futures free from oppression.

Sessions, which will take a wide range of formats, will include speakers and organisations including Dr Annabel Sowemimo, Gargi Bhattacharyya, Adam Elliott-Cooper, Stella Dadzie

(OWAAD), Joshua Virasami, Temi Mwale (4Front), Dr Tarek Younis, Dr Rizwaan Sabir, Dr Shabna Begum, Hil Aked, Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan, Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB), London Renters' Union (LRU), Copwatch, Sins Invalid, Migrants Organise, RESOLVE, and Level Up. Panels and workshops will cover themes including the harms of the benefits system, deaths in state custody, prison abolition, cultural resistance, climate justice, decolonising healthcare, narrative change, and politicised somatics. Interactive spaces include zine-making, Tai Chi sessions, art workshops, skillshares, and community dinners. Each session will explore at least one of four key themes: safety, dignity, belonging, and life.

The festival will take place across three London community sites: **Block 336** in Brixton, **Resource for London** in Holloway, and **Avalon Café** in Bermondsey. Events will engage closely with each respective local community, with a view to building longer-lasting relationships, infrastructures, and broader movements that support communities' ability to be well.

Rehearsing Freedoms is the culmination of a broader two-year programme of community-led health and healing, which asks: "How can we root visions for radical and just health in safety, dignity, and belonging, in order for us all to live whole and flourishing lives? What capacities, skills, and strategies do we need to practise to help us get free together?"

Healing Justice Ldn describes Rehearsing Freedoms as responding to a backdrop of mass austerity, ecological crises, and the Covid-19 pandemic. They identified six thematic areas for their strategic response to these crises: **disability justice; housing, land, and spatial justice; bereavement and grief work; state violence and securitisation; gender justice and survivor support; and rest and play**. The broader two-year iterative programme works towards "abolishing oppressive structures and building alternative infrastructures rooted in justice, dignity and liberation".

Farzana Khan, founder and Co-director of Healing Justice Ldn, said:

"Rehearsing Freedoms invites us to practise a new social pattern together, and find novel formations for our communities and movements. We want to build ecosystems that are hope-filled, powerful, sustainable, and robust, and can skilfully navigate ongoing precarity, pressure, polarisation and oppression. We invite communities to come together to explore, experiment, organise, grow, and engage in deep political education with one another."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

WHAT IS HEALING JUSTICE LDN?

[Healing Justice Ldn \(HJL\)](#) is an organisation that builds community-led health and healing to create capacity for personal and structural transformation. Using a multi-layered and

multi-systems approach, they work to shift communities from states of trauma, ill-health and chronic unsustainability – produced by oppression and systemic injustice – towards futures free from intimate, interpersonal and structural violence. HJL is a Community Interest Company (CIC).

HJL'S VALUES AND STRATEGY

HJL believes that liberation is a practice, and an emerging process that requires radical visioning and creative skills to nurture **well-being, health, joy** and **abundance** for people subject to marginalisation. They are informed and inspired by healing justice, disability justice, transformative justice, abolition, and intersectional feminisms. Alongside this, they understand spiritual, cultural and indigenous traditions to be valid sites of knowledge that move us towards our wholeness and help us practise radical alternatives outside of dominant oppressive structures.

HJL's sites of strategic intervention are: **community programmes, structural interventions, and sustaining movements**. Their **community programmes create** spaces for healing and learning, centering people that are subject to marginalisation. They facilitate community-led healing in the form of workshops, training, skillshares and events. Their **structural interventions** advocate for systemic shifts in health and broader public sectors, engaging radical practitioners and experts by experience (service users) to collaboratively challenge outdated structures and build towards radical alternative models and infrastructures. Their work in **sustaining movements** focuses on supporting lived-experience leaders to create more sustainable ecosystems for transformational leadership. They work with grassroots groups and communities to navigate sites of breakdown and burnout, and focus on strategies like conflict transformation, sustainability, and oppression and racialised trauma training.

WHAT IS KIN STRUCTURES?

Kin Structures were the Curating and Producing Partner for Rehearsing Freedoms. Kin Structures is the collaborative practice of Arman Nouri and Kwame Lowe. Together, they are building and sustaining community and cultural infrastructure. They work with art and culture to build relationships and cultivate exchange of the ideas, knowledges and practices necessary to create just futures.

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