

# INTRODUCTORY CERTIFICATE IN COMMUNITY HEALING

THE ORIGIN  
STORY

# Origin Story

In the Summer of 2022, Jia Johnson, SBI Director and Adjunct, invited the Honorable Hakim Dough to collaborate in co-developing a workshop series on art and activism, using black music and songwriting as a way to transmute the indignation, rage and grief caused by injustice into an outlet for creative expression.

In this workshop entitled “Through These Bars: Liberation, Healing and Transmutation”, incarcerated students at the Cook County Department of Corrections, engaged in a hands-on process of self-creation and artistic expression through art as a means of therapeutic release, bonding/relating with others and liberating one’s self and others through their own imaginative faculties. As their final project, they co-created their version of protest songs using Resmaa Menakem’s concept of compassionate agitation in My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Pending our Hearts and Hands. Compassionate agitation is an intentional way to bring to light the social conditions that create injustice with the purpose of healing the wounds caused by oppression.

The “Through These Bars” workshop was a pilot for what would go on to become what Johnson entitled the Art of Community Healing course. The Art of Community Healing course utilizes art and spiritual activism, through an inside-out model, to bridge the gap between learning communities at the Cook County Jail with those in the free world at McCormick Theological Seminary and the broader community. Using the carceral classroom, at the Cook County Jail, as an entry point to engage generative dialogue around the issues of justice, punishment, liberation, community healing, art and spiritual activism, learners create artistic pieces (protest songs, spoken word poetry, streetwear design, digital art, dance, etc.) as a means to transmute the suffering caused by oppression into proclaiming the Good News of God’s liberating message, denouncing the injustice in the world and pronouncing a different future.

# Origin Story (cont.)

Rev. Lis Valle was invited to collaborate on this project because of her work and passion for activism and prophetic preaching. Using the Through These Bars workshop framework, Valle and Johnson integrated Valle's work of prophetic preaching as part of the Art of Community Healing course. In the coming years, this course will be offered as an inside-out model, inviting free students to learn alongside incarcerated learners.



# About the Introductory Certificate in Community Healing

Collaborators



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Students receive hands-on experience in co-creating learning communities that cultivate critical thinking, social analysis, self-awareness, collaboration, exploration of creative solutions to social issues, appreciation for diverse perspectives, dialogue across differences, and strengthen relationship building both inside and outside the jail. As both the learner and practitioner, students discuss themes essential to community healing such as spiritual activism, personal narrative, lived experience, justice, social change, love, artistic expression, abolition, restorative justice, healing justice, mindfulness, and body-centered practices.

Through learning labs such as facilitating peer-led book discussions, facilitation of sessions, leading class discussions, facilitating opening and closing rituals and the like, students are exposed to ways of being that repair harm and meet multiple community needs. Additionally, students will dialogue with and learn from system impacted practitioners to create a vision of community healing for their unique circumstances.



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# Learning Objectives



## 01 Utilize

Utilize the authoritative source of their experience and the particularities of their social identity to articulate the interconnection between healing and social change.



## 02 Integrate

Use and integrate a variety of interdisciplinary resources in order to construct meaning for their time and place.



## 03 Practice

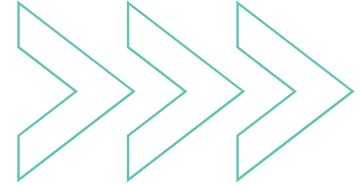
Practice the key themes from the certificate courses to gain hands-on experience with co-leading learning communities.



## 03 Nurture

Nurture the co-creation of learning communities.

# The Certificate Courses



## Art and Spiritual Activism: Reimagining Preaching for Public Ministry

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Reimagining Preaching for Public Ministry is a 10-week learning lab course that utilizes art and spiritual activism. Students are invited to reimagine preaching for public ministry as an artistic process that transmutes the suffering caused by oppression into proclaiming God’s message of liberation and healing. Students participate in a hands-on, collaborative process of self-creation and artistic expression through various artistic mediums such as music, dance, theater, creative writing, poetry, streetwear clothing, and graphic design as a means of compassionate agitation, prophetic proclamation, therapeutic release, bonding/relating with others and liberating one’s self and others through their imaginative faculties to create liberating preaching pieces.

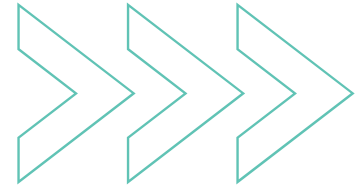
## Body-Centered Practices for Community Healing

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This learning lab entitled Tools and Practices for Community Healing is part of the “Introductory Certificate in Community Healing.” Students will engage in a thoughtful reading of *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, by Resmaa Menakem. Students will participate in peer-led discussions on the historical and present-day impact of racial trauma on individual bodies and within society. Students will explore the assumptions and experiences that lead to racial violence and how to begin to heal from racial trauma through body-center practices that move us towards a more just society. Menakem discusses themes such as the historical legacy of racism, culture of institutional racism, the intergenerational racialized trauma and how to heal it. Additionally, students, will learn the practice of facilitation and engage resources to host book conversations while incarcerated. Every week, students will co-lead the opening ritual and co-facilitate the group discussions with their peers on the assigned reading.



# The Certificate Courses



## Healing and Justice Conversation Series

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This 12-week learning lab course entitled Healing and Justice Conversation Series is part of the “Introductory Certificate in Community Healing”. Through dialogue, praxis and reading of selected passages from the primary texts *Love and Rage: The Path to Liberation through Anger* by Lama Rod Owens and bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*, and additional selected readings, students will ask rigorous questions such as how do we understand justice? How do we know love? What is community healing? How do we understand Lama Rod Owens’ *7 Homecomings* as a vision for community healing? A primary goal for the learning lab is to acknowledge the transformative power of anger for individual and social change. As both learners and practitioners students, will co-facilitate opening and closing rituals such as mindfulness practices, community agreements and check ins/outs.

# Support This Work!

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You too can be part of this community healing! Please help us spread the word about this work, share with a friend.



Or visit <https://sbimccormick.org/donate>

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to make change, together.

Questions? Comments?

Contact us!

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