



EQUALITY STUDIES ASSOCIATION,  
POLITICAL WELL-BEING PROJECT

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**WHITE PAPER  
ON  
THE POLITICAL WELL-BEING**

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2021

## **CONTENTS**

### **CHAPTER I**

1. ABOUT THE EQUALITY STUDIES ASSOCIATION .....	3
2. HOW AND WHY WAS THIS PROJECT INITIATED? .....	2
3. THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS. ....	4
4. THE CONTENT OF THE WHITE PAPER .....	10

### **CHAPTER II**

1. WHAT IS POLITICAL WELL-BEING?.....	12
2. POLITICAL WELL-BEING AND COLLECTIVE HEALING. ....	18
3. EMBRACING OF FREE/FEARLESS SPEECH .....	19
4. TO DEFEND THE COMMON LIFE AGAINST ISOLATION. ....	20
5. EMOTIONS THROUGH POLITICAL TIES .....	22

### **CHAPTER III**

1. SOME ADVICE ON COLLECTIVE HEALING .....	23
2. HOW WE CAN PROTECT OURSELVES FROM POLITICAL BAD NEWS.....	28
3. SOME ACTIVITIES FROM OUR WORKSHOPS .....	29
4. FURTHER READING.....	35
5. EXPLORE SOME PROJECT SAMPLES .....	34
6; SUGGESTED PRACTICES FOR COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING. ....	38



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# CHAPTER I



## EQUALITY STUDIES ASSOCIATION (ESA)

ESA was established in 2019. Struggle against all forms of inequality, especially gender inequality is essential for our association. Our focus lies in developing policies and tools for combating the legitimization of inequality, eliminating and compensating the damage caused by inequality, and working towards eliminating the causes of inequality. Also, to provide solidarity among those exposed to inequality is one of our missions.





## HOW AND WHY THIS PROJECT WAS INITIATED?

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Four factors to mention which have precipitated the emergence of the Political Well Being Project:

- 1- Diminishing of the conditions required for well-being of political laborers&activists
- 2- In the face of authoritarianism, apoliticism has come to be implicitly suggested as a requirement for wellness.
- 3- Domination of the masculine way of producing politics from right-wing to left-wing environments, which removes the determinants of well-being in political, family, business, and romantic relationships.
- 4- Perception of well-being activities broadly as the postmodern mode of anti-politics in political circles/organizations.

Our project is a criticism of the neoliberal wellness & personal growth perspective on the one side, and also it is complimentary for the projects which are nothing more than the application of the standard well-being activities for political activists.

[1] The concept of "political laborer" points to the professionals and/or volunteers who work in political organizations.



Neoliberal wellness and/or well-being activities exclude the agenda concerning political items like political regimes, public services, working conditions, gender relations, etc. Additionally, personal empowerment is formed only around coping mechanisms. Focusing on emotions, in that perspective, mostly ends up with fetishizing emotions.

Similarly, rising awareness may lead individuals to satisfaction with themselves but at the same time an endless unsatisfaction with others. Because it induces awareness to a chain of the demands, rather than a channel to emotional empowerment. Whereas, feminist rendering of empowerment emphasizes the importance of independence from authoritarian persons&institutions which come through the realization of individuals' entitlement to economic, social, and political sources.

However, drawing on the “care perspective”, mutual dependency in a society is not acknowledged as weakness, rather it is the power that emboldens the urge to be a ‘real’ coherent society. In sum, the idea underpins collective political well-being basically hinges on being independent from the authoritarian bodies in a co-dependent society.

In this study, queer is regarded as a perspective, not an identity. It holds an anti-normative position for establishing some joyful, resilient, and democratic political environments. That is also to say, it is a stance that widens the possibility for a radical democratic collaboration against all normative privileges such as Turk, man, heterosexual, Sunni, and 'able'. Political Well-Being Project suggests this queer feminist perspective to be prioritized in the way of producing politics, relationships, and organizations with the aiming of democratization of well-being. As the big picture, the claim of this project is "politics can be caring and joyful!".

## THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

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The participants of the workshops stated their expectations regarding their well-being before the course. Those statements are extremely valuable to grasp how authoritarianism's affected people's well-being in Turkey and to spot the potential waiting for to spark, the potential that has to do with ourselves, our relations, and political opportunities

The problems that the participants face in their close relations show that activism may entail loneliness in family relations under current circumstances. That also should be regarded as a marker concerning the importance of having political organizations in which well-being is appreciated. If we to summarize this problem alongside the participants' sentences:

Political activism is perceived as an extreme radical activity.

The issues we bring up are seen as insignificant and thus downplayed.

Feminists are blamed as man-haters, they are being treated as if they are exaggerating everything





Some families of LGBTQI+ activists are trying to make their efforts invisible.

we have to grapple with sarcasm and mocking because of our political activism.

While I can explain myself well enough in the environments, I fail in my family. Because family relationships are rife with emotional waves.

Activists who are living in small cities are even more alone

As the Political Well-Being Team, we put a premium on queer feminism as to its' potential to transform the way of producing politics, and our relationships with ourselves and others. The observations of the participants about LGBTQ+ and feminist organizations also set both the shortcomings and the opportunities in this account.

They think one of the best sides of those movements is their lack of political self-interest. The movements are epitomized by their high level of political energy.

The participants consider that the political environment of those movements is unique as to be an avenue for the very honorable and special people who are also very inclined to help each other regardless of knowing each other or not. Very importantly, it is also noted that the LGBTQ+ and feminist circles are less judgmental in comparison to other political circles in Turkey.

On the other side, the participants criticize those movements asserting their failure to respond the sympathy flows from people towards them properly, considering the limited number of people who are organized in those movements. Katılımcılar bu olumlu özelliklerine rağmen queer ve feminist hareketlerin kendilerine duyulan sempatiye yanıt veremediğini, bu ilgiye kıyasla az kişinin örgütlenebildiğini düşünüyor. Özellikle küçük şehirlerde yaşayan katılımcılar politik örgütlenme olanaklarından da yoksun kaldıkları için kendilerini daha da yalnız hissediyorlar. Bu tespit, politik örgütlenmelerin online çalışmalarının bu yalnızlığın bir ölçüde giderebilmesine yönelik bir potansiyeli ortaya koymasından açısından önemli.



Organizing which is also the title of the last workshop in our training comes forward in this regard. The participants notice the quick and short circulation of the political organizations, most of them can't live long. Some complain that the organizational process in political organizations is not different from any regular company. Because of the lack of encouragement of freedom of speech, lack of opportunities for creativity, organizations are seen as 'boring' after a while.

Then, what is it that the participants need to settle collective well-being in political environments? They firstly state that they want to understand how politics and well-being combined? The answer to this question is actually one of the strongest sides of the Project.

Interestingly, near all participants has a sense or impression about queer theory. They see that it carries the potential to transform the narrowing and pressuring perspective of current politics. However, they have difficulties concretizing the queer theory in daily activism. In sum, a chasm between the interest in the theory and reflection of it in activism draws attention.

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çöğThe majority of the participants explained well-being as a need for themselves but also for others. Namely, they appreciate it both on individual and collective levels. Additionally, some said they want to learn how they can practice the well-being activities that they have already been doing on an individual basis, in their political circles.

Many participants asked, "how I can empower myself and also give hope to other people at the same time?" Assessing and discussing the topics with others, trading the thoughts are nicely stated as the needs to settle collective well-being.

In parallel to the problems relating to political organizations mentioned above, the participants wanted to learn more about organizing and organizations as a necessity for well-being.

The participants want to rekindle their sense of empathy and increase their interest in politics by learning the political perspective prioritizing well-being. In this project, we focus on this need by reevaluating our perspective regarding individual and community.

The participants who have jobs more related to social services, especially the ones who work with people with trauma, shared their need to learn the tactics to protect themselves while running their jobs.

The high portion of the participants are suffering loosing their sense of empathy and their interest in politics. They feel hopeless since they feel their all efforts are futile and they can't see "good days" in their lifetimes.







## THE CONTENT OF THE WHITE PAPER

During the political well-being , we received feedback from the participants about their needs, problems, and setbacks regarding not knowing how to nurse their and people's in the well-being of their environment. these, some activities are implemented for the identification and examination of the barriers which need to be overcome if political well-being is to be realized. Additionally, a satisfaction survey is conducted after every workshop and it has been done a comprehensive study about the most liked activities by participants. The result of the survey can be summarized as follow:

1. The participants indicated that they have to establish a strategy to nurse their personal and collective well-being.
2. The participants indicated that they don't devote their time to contemplate o identify and to examine what needs to be done to realize wholeness and happiness in politics.
3. Some of the participants indicated that even though they are interested in activities such as meditation, bodywork, etc. They are having trouble with finding proper sources that are specialized for activists and the lack of these sources negatively affects the sustainability of their well-being.
4. Even though, in recent years, policymakers have shown renewed interest in the notion of wellbeing or happiness in many countries, these two are still mistakenly being used interchangeably. As to Turkey's case, well-being, in general, is not even on the agenda of any political movement&party, notwithstanding the effects of authoritarianism.



As The Political Well-being team, we decided to provide an applicable well-being source for the political laborers&activists and for those who are barely engaged in politics. The aim is to present a service map that consists of similar projects or activities and to give tips that they can use to support their personal and collective well-being. Therefore, the booklet is not a detailed academic report specialized in this field, rather an introductory study for activists to contain information to support their well-being.

To sum, some activities based on these feedbacks have been included in the workshops. It is planned to improve these activities thanks to the feedbacks which hopefully will be gathered for the White Paper.



# CHAPTER II

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## WHAT IS POLITICAL WELL BEING?



Political Well Being, as a concept, has been newly proposed through this project. It points to the democratization of the political process for the political laborers&activists by relying on a well-being & care perspective, and restructuring of the current policy due to elimination of the direct-indirect effects of authoritarianism on all folks accordingly. The general aim is to develop tools for mental, emotional, and physical empowerment in political circles. In this frame, a change in the perspective on well-being regarding its relation to the state, ideologies, and political institutions is prioritized. It is accepted that consistency and harmony between (personal) political views and (societal) political culture towards democratization are necessary for the realization of well-being for all. As an overall conclusion over the long run, The Project hopes to aspire a perspective that the measures of well-being are to be introduced into policy-making, the case for wellbeing to be the ultimate goal of policymaking.

IT WILL BE SAFE TO SAY THAT THE RELATION BETWEEN WELL-BEING AND POLITICS STILL HAS BEEN UNDERSTUDIED, IT LACKS ENOUGH ATTENTION. YET, THERE ARE SOME SIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS WE CAN BENEFIT FROM. FIRST OF ALL, IT SEEMS THAT THE EXISTENCE OF THE WELFARE STATE IS UNDERLINED AS THE PIVOTAL DETERMINANT OF THE WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY.

ALL THE MORE, IT IS STATED THAT IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES, EVEN EXPONENTS OF THE REGIME ARE SUFFERING FROM POOR WELL-BEING; WHILE IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE THE WELFARE STATE IS QUITE STRONG, CONDITIONS OF WELL-BEING ARE REACHABLE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

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As to well-being, income and wealth inequality is the major problem in the world. Even international organizations such as IMF and WB which explicitly defend capitalism, recently have focused on the issue for the sake of the survival of capitalism. It means that inequality in the world is at such a level that even threatens the permanence of capitalist society. Another disastrous implication of this growing inequality, notably in the countries under authoritarian regimes, has been the demise of the common public spaces available for free that folks can get together. Socialization has become almost a luxurious activity. People are losing the ground for collective activities, a ground against polarization, and also a ground for the mundane daily healing experiments.

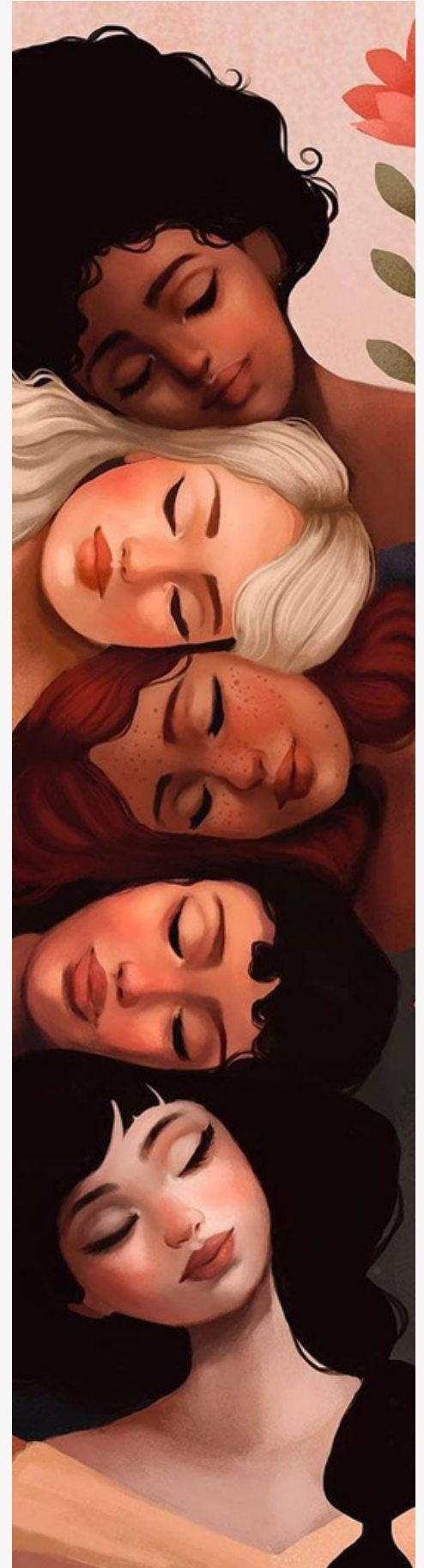
Right-wing politics justify inequalities on the basis of biological, religious, way too personal reasons such as disposition, creation, laziness, or fate (Adam Okulicz-Kozaryn ve Oscar Holmes, 2014). However, from a leftist perspective, it is crucial to reveal the structural and political reasons behind the inequalities. Considering this difference, a world with growing inequalities is becoming much more challenging for left-wing supporters. In parallel to the growing inequalities, the gap between the well-being of conservatives and progressives is also roaring (Napier ve Jost, 2008).

Under the circumstances mentioned above, emotions become something the left-wing supporters are only 'exposed to' unless left-wing politics develop a strategy towards emotional empowerment. For this reason, the realization of the values such as equality and freedom in daily life is also of fundamental importance. For instance, for right-wing supporters, justice is more concrete than equality, since it happens at least between two people. Equality, on the other side, is widely sensed as inequality which is omnipresent, therefore natural and unchangeable... (See. Günay et al., 2017). Similarly, the left's tendency to produce more complicated answers to the societal problems than right-wing (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003) is another call to the left-wing politics to focus on well-being for the resilience of left-wing political laborers&activists&voters. Taken all, it is essential to grasp the fact that even the left-wing supporters might incline to have some emotions and thoughts which fortify right-wing ideology unless they can not find any ground to justify those feelings and thoughts and feel alone in them.

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A comprehensive research by Nebi Sümer suggests that in terms of psychological resilience in Turkey, the unemployed, the opposition, and Kurds seem more depressive. Moreover, the tendency towards depression among the supporters of the governing party is also above the normal level. According to GALLUP's emotional scale, Turkey is the least smiling country in the World in 2020. Turkey is one of the countries where the trust among people is low, as well. According to World Value Survey (2005-2014), it ranks 3rd from the end among 29 countries (World Values Survey Wave 7 2017-2020). The study says only 8 percent of the citizens (1/5 of the world average) in Turkey trust other people. This rate, for instance, is stated above 65 percent in Switzerland. In conclusion, despite the governing party's -AKP- constant propaganda on 'family ideology', people in Turkey don't trust even the family members. Whereas, people in other countries can develop trust for the people they don't even meet. In other words, quite a high level of democracy widens the sense of family beyond blood ties.

In that point, it might be useful to bear in mind Ulrich Beck's mark that distrust might be the common emotion which ties people to one each other than trust in some (modern) societies. Security's being at the center in the political discourse of authoritarian governments is stemming from this deepening need for trust. It is the lack of trust that urges people to get close to the authoritarian personalities and institutions which curbs the possibilities for collective well-being. The more people lose the political and social conditions for safety&trust&happiness, the more they become prone to stay close to the authoritarian figures. Besides, 'the family ideology' is not only substituted family with the welfare state, but also it points to blood relatives as more precious than friendship, comradeship, love relations, etc.



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Polarization, in countless studies, is underlined as the main propelling force of extreme right-wing populism. It is a societal malady that produces an enduring 'collective unhappiness', antagonizes the tension in the society, and curbs a democratic political race. But it is not a question we only face in the authoritarian regime, it might be even more challenging after a regime change when the social coherency will be an issue on the agenda. The most important lesson we can get from the experience of traditional fascism is that melting of the social cleavages that we have to face with the aim of economic development&technological improvement for the sake of recovery brings the same questions back to the society with even burdens. For this reason, social cohesion is included in our project as a condition for collective well-being. Inclusion of all society in the process of the resolution of the social traumas like the Kurdish question is regarded as crucial for the recovery after authoritarianism.

The major risk for the countries like Turkey that have faced authoritarianism for over 20 years is putting off the steps required for a ground for the recovery of the society towards the flourishing of values as collectivism, solidarity, and togetherness. The feeling of the triumph which comes with the demise of the current government may also entail a pseudo feeling of an automatic change in political life. Therefore it is significant not to limit the conditions for political well-being to the change of authoritarian government, instead, portraying political well-being as a new way of aspiring politics which should be initiated in all spheres from the (formal/informal) micro-units of society to the major institutions. Queer feminism as a methodology inspires us in that sense to form/encourage organizations settled with a perspective based on the well-being of members.





The Political Well-Being Project is structured with a perspective alternative to authoritarianism at a starting point, however, it can not be induced to this claim. Given the fact that authoritarianism is not only a regime but also a mode of producing politics from right to left, The Project includes activities to go beyond dualism, to break isolation, to make good examples visible in our engagement in politics.

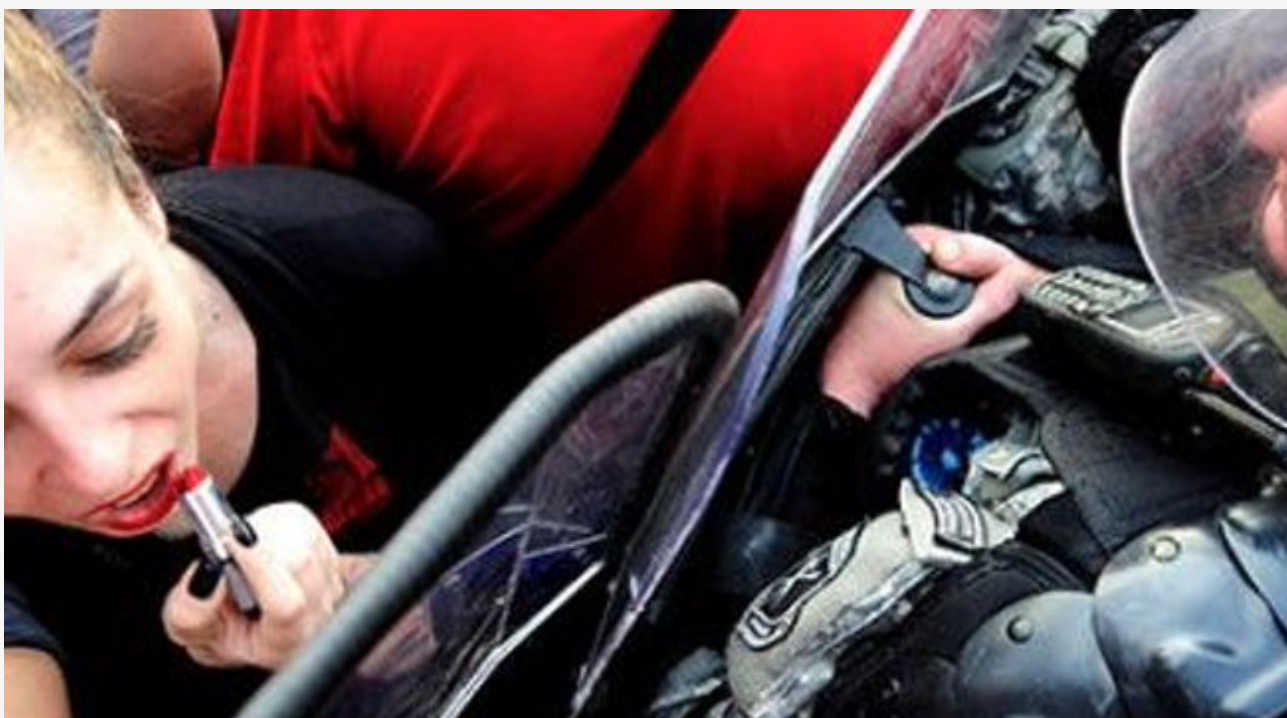
Authoritarianism also should be acknowledged as alienation experienced at a societal level. Consistently, increasing the strength at both individual and societal levels is the first and foremost step for well-being. Authoritarian regimes need the impotence of the folks which means stripping the folks off from their abilities.

In sum, Political Well-being Project, in essential, is also about increasing the power of people and political institutions at every level. Here, forgoing the potency and strength of the people for the sake of being non- hierarchial/centrist/authoritarian politics as opposition movements including queer and feminist movements do sometimes, is in fact a risk in terms of political well-being. That's why we separate the power and the potency. They are not the continuation of one another but are alternatives to one another. Relatedly, as to political well-being is the decrease of the interest and time spared for art and cultural studies. The activities and methodology of the workshops run in the project are being put on premium in that sense and hopefully will be improved in time in this regard.

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Extreme new-right populism/post-fascism is being discussed as an international phenomenon, the existence of the international right-wing collaborations are pointed out occasionally. This indication itself is trenchant to comprehend the international continuities of these regimes, however, when the counter-international remain invisible, it produces tantalizing hopelessness by exaggerating the power and life of these regimes. At that point, it is paramount to remember the 'waves of democracy' which show us alongside the history that societies, governments, institutions may “pass on” some democratic traditions and tools to each other. Drawing on this consideration, our project underlines the importance of making visible local and transnational good examples.

With this Project, we hope to transcend the source of motivation for political acts which mainly confined to the sphere of actual/major politics which concentrates on election victories. We underline other sources to gain motivation and potency for political action embedded in the broadness and depth of life. We hope to (re)gain emotions that build a fair society. Every emotion also corresponds with a public service or enactment of a right in a society, Political Well-Being project focuses on the entitlement of the rights in this sense. We don't regard political well-being as unconditional and eternal happiness, it is a fluctuating process nourished by a revolutionary joy and also anger which points to a will to change.





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# POLITICAL WELL-BEING AND COLLECTIVE HEALING

## ARE THE WELL-BEING ACTIVITIES SUPPOSED TO BE PRACTICED ALONE?



Using the well-being-meditation app can be a good starting point to do something valuable for yourself. But are the well-being activities supposed to be practised alone? Mainstream psychiatry and psychology, as well as the self-help movement, are burdened by the expectation that self-regulation skills must be mastered to achieve wellbeing. Sally Davies, who is a psychologist says that "I've been traveling around the world for much longer trying to understand how people face and respond to suffering. Emotion regulation to reduce distress appears to be a fundamental human behavior that doesn't just happen within us, but between us....." Why do humans spend minutes, hours, and weeks to comfort others who are not emotionally in a good place, even when that's not their profession? Why do we as humans support one another? And why helping each other or being solidarity with, in different degrees, as a societal pattern has been followed across cultures and throughout history?

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Isolation from a community or being an integral part of it directly affects our emotional process. Each group member has a role in collective healing, renovation, protection, and the maintenance of the collective. "A group member who monopolizes all the resources from others might get a short-term benefit, but she's more vulnerable to threats overall because the group as a whole has been weakened." Therefore, what we mean by collective healing is structuring a way of life in which everyone plays a part, be a practitioner and/or constituent of a group by taking the responsibility of the healing and maintenance of the collective.

Manifestly, one of the main claims of political well-being is to demand and build the conditions of healing for everyone not only for ourselves. Therefore, during the workshops, we offer certain methods which combine individual healing with collective healing –healing of and for the society. We also aim to underline what works better both for the habitat we live in and for ourselves together.

## **Embracing of Free/Fearless Speech**

Fearless speech" and broadening of the spheres and places for the freedom of speech are also both a must and a byword for collective healing. What we mean by free speech is not only the articulation of our thoughts without having the fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction but it is an art of life that leaves some responsibilities on the speaker. Speaking freely is a skill that needs to be studied and developed. However, that skill is not hence on only personal efforts but also political environments. As a starting point of collective well-being, it is important to keep in mind that thanks to speaking we can carve out a space for conversation, we are encouraged to have an honest and compassionate inner glance, face with our propensity to authoritarianism.

Free speech corresponds to the term Parrhesia which is referred to and studied by Foucault. Parrhesia means the courage to speak and truth. The most prominent feature of Parrhesia is it's potential both for the speaker and the listener. But this unrest and tension shouldn't be considered as necessarily a negative element. This confrontation calls the truth which also can include anger and offense provided with the limitation of violence. Finally, we can say that free speech is a presentation of courage that says vulnerability is also welcome if it is bound upon with self-emancipation.



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Freedom of speech is especially important for the sustainability of activism. By free speech, we get to enjoy speaking as one of the most important tools to heal each other.

Precariousness has been entrenched mostly in the face of the abandonment of the social state. The loss of fundamental rights in areas as unions, social housing, job&wage security has been extended to more comprehensive loss in the places where we came together, structured the politics, and be in solidarity. The number of cultural centers, the classes&conference rooms where free speech can be exercised is being reduced.

To structure a system in which we can face our personal, societal, and ideological authoritarian tendencies, our –if there is- yearn for power. When people feel precarious in every sphere of life they become searching for a strong authoritarian figure they can lean on. These authoritarian figures even can turn to a conformation for people that approve their existence by indirectly suppressing them. To stand up against this, we should establish a system first that we can discuss our micropower relationships. When we call " system", we mean a system that can continue in spite of the internal tension of the organization, to transform queer feminism into a system that can operate in daily relations. Only the spaces that we establish or transform create that we can nurse each other can be an alternative to the traditional authoritarian formal (state institutions etc.) and informal figures (patriarchal family). The spaces we are in solidarity and good for each other by speaking, listening, taking care of each other are the places that we can breathe which are more crucial than ever now.



## To defend the common life against isolation

Neoliberalism and authoritarianism both push us into our inner space in many ways. Not listening to each other, the loss of the importance of “the word”, and the elimination of emotion from human relations open distances between people and make human contact unbearable. For this reason, the namely soothing and safe comfort of isolation has become preferable because of the difficulty of solidarity and living together under the current way of organizing and practicing politics. Sometimes we feel mostly judged in the places where we are supposed to feel way round. Isolation is worth considering not only because of breaking the power of solidarity, but also because it takes away peoples’ potential to extend their limits by communication with others.

# HOPE IS DIFFERENT FROM TOXIC POSITIVISM

In the book *Hope without Optimism*, hope is discussed as a life principle by Terry Eagleton. According to Eagleton, hope is necessary for believing in a meaningful life and meaningful actions regardless of the outcome of the action. According to Ernst Bloch, hope is a faculty that we can gain by practicing, it is a skill we can acquire by working on it.

To consider the concept of “hope” in this manner, allows us to see the difference between “artificial positivity glance” and “hope”. While optimism is a superstition, the belief that everything will be fine also covers the fact that hope is an attitude that can only be developed, changed, and lived through effort. For an optimistic, happiness is easy to achieve. For being happy, it is enough to believe that you are happy. However, as a founding principle, hope differs from optimism by inviting one to take responsibility for her/his/them role in hope, and the potential for resistance it contains. The place of hope in collective healing lies primarily in seeing the potential for healing where there is hopelessness. As an attitude, hopelessness contains hope in terms of detecting the negative situation, intending to change it, and seeking ways to keep this change alive in the process.

## Emotions Through Political Ties

Collective well-being is based upon an affection that only can be reached through the deed of action, not confined to its environment&habitat and that is not indifferent to what is happening in the world. When we take affection as a tool to create and 'defend' the common life, it can be a waypost for people to go beyond their limits.

To consider the emotional relationships between people as a political sphere is to aim to be the main actor for forming a political bond. With this consideration, we learn to take responsibility for the connections, and also we can enjoy them. We learn to open space for the emotional turbulence that can disrupt the equality between people when remain undiscussable. And also, this understanding helps us consider a relationship as something rebuilt eternally (and takes its strength from this restructuring), rather than something that is in a constant balance.



Well-being's being demanded by everyone for everyone would have a positive effect on democracy since it strengthens the sense of community. A community that includes everyone interprets the possibility of personal well-being in association with the principles of common life, a community we are not only a part of but also we establish together... Can an individual who can not exercise her well-being be free? Can a community that does not care about the well-being of its members promise freedom and equality for all? Taking all these together, establishing the responsibilities, opportunities and common values allows us to consider solidarity, equality, and responsibility as intertwined elements which are strongly related to democracy as well.



# CHAPTER III



## SOME ADVICE ON COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING

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1. Search the websites, gatherings, organizations, tools, and places that you can support your well-being.

2. Come together with those who are struggling to sustain their political well-being. And initiate a social group that you can practice the well-being activities together.

3. Develop a strategy to protect yourself from the bad news, videos that make you feel overwhelmed (You can benefit from our guide below). You can organize a "Protection from bad news workshop" to share strategies and learn from each other.

4. Write a letter (you can see the 'Letter To..' activity above) to a person or people who left a strong impression on you thanks to her/his/their act of solidarity.

5. Try to undertake and demand to institutionalize collective well-being in your gathering, union, organization, workplace, etc.





6. Schedule the dance, painting, storytelling, wellbeing history, music activities to include well-being in your daily routine. And propose to practice these activities together within the groups that you are included.

Make suggestions to the group to do these artistic works with the group you are in. For example:

- We recommend you to watch Art Therapy Body Scan Meditation/art therapy exercises videos for art and well-being exercises.
- You can prepare music lists that make you feel safe, cheerful and peaceful. In fact, we recommend that you prepare these lists with your friends and that everyone add a song to this list.
- First of all, let's remind ourselves that we should work by freeing ourselves without having an aesthetic concern in painting works. You can do free painting work with a friend you feel safe with. In this study, when your friend closes his eyes, you will use his hands (instead of a brush) to paint on the picture paper you have laid on the floor and he will continue in the same way when you stop. While doing this work, the contact of the bodies can also be facilitating.
- Our second suggestion about painting is that you first practice a meditation that will help you understand how you are feeling at that moment, and then you can paint that emotion through an object, accompanied by relaxing music. In all your painting, it is important that you focus on the reflection of your emotions on the painting, not on your painting skills. You can also do this work with your friends. Everyone can share their feelings with each other in a circle chat, and then you can reflect the resulting emotion on paper through objects that can be related to each other.
- Also, you can write the story of the object that you pictured before
- You can find our detailed suggestions about dance in Article 11.



FIGURE 1.

7. It can be a healing to talk to a friend frankly that you've had problems with recently and apologize from her/him/they. It is important to be sure that your friend is ready
8. Organize regular online meetings, gatherings with activist who live in small cities and feel alone, and lack well-being opportunities.
9. Before or after the demonstrations, you can organize specific meditation or other well-being activities which aim to mitigate the anxiety and strengthen the feeling of togetherness.
10. Humor creates an important opportunity to reduce tension and enable people to look at things from a different perspective. You can organize drawing workshops that can make humor a part of your gathering. You can also organize your friends to watch the performances of feminist comedians together (like Hannah Gadsby or Ali Wong). Or you can organize workshops for re-editing/transforming any official or political document in/into a humorous language.

111. Everything that happens in the world has an effect on our bodies. When you don't have a good relationship with your body, neither your tension nor your happiness is trapped in your body. For this reason, you can focus on activities that can increase your awareness of the effects of daily life on your body, relax and strengthen your body in the face of what is happening in the world. The best and easiest thing you can do is to dance alone or with your friends. You can try 5 Rhythm dance videos, Qigong practices, Osho dynamic Dance exercises, and Chakra dance, which you can easily find on the Internet.

Also, you can follow:

- Body, Movement and Freedom with Tuğçe Tuna
- Tarık Tekman's free Qigong
- Movement in the Moment with Dila Egger
- 5 rhythm dances with Alexa Schmid
- BoMoVu Free Movement
- "Salutation to the Sun Series for Beginners" with Elvin Levinler
- Body awareness exercises and Short Body Scan meditations

Apart from these, don't forget that dancing with your friends is also a great meditation for your body and a collective communication method for healing.

Hugging is one of the easiest and most healing activities you can do on your own and with friends. Don't forget to hug yourself and your friends when you need it.

12. Remembering the rhythm in nature, being able to internalize the cycle in nature, and staying in that balance and awareness will not only increase our capacity to monitor and evaluate what is happening in our collective, but also create a safe space for us to talk to ourselves. Increasing awareness of nature will also facilitate your integration with the ecological struggle against the commodification of nature. For this, you can organize a nature camp with your activist friends and try to create a small green space in the garden or balcony of your institution. Or you can practice your meditations accompanied the sound of nature. If there is a green area near your house, you can practice slow and quiet walking some mornings in this area

13. You can make a collective recovery calendar, and in this calendar you can include activities that you think will be good for you and the organization you are in, based on the examples above.

14. You can make a list of solidarity networks with your friends. You can diversify these solidarity networks under different topics such as LGBTI+, food cooperatives, ecology, poverty etc. You can turn this list preparation part into a workshop. In the meantime, you can light a candle, start the workshop with a circle of emotions, and turn on some music in the list preparation section. Don't forget to hug each other with your friends while completing the workshop.





# HOW WE CAN PROTECT OURSELVES FROM POLITICAL BAD NEWS?



Exposing to the negative news over a certain level can trigger some anxieties even we don't have a directly related experience in our life. But then, how we can keep up with the developments while protecting ourselves at the same time? Here are some suggestions that we develop for you by benefitting from the ideas of several experts.

Start with asking yourself "Do I want to read this news right now?". If you decided to read it and felt down, don't try to shun your emotions, accept them and start to think over them again.

- Writing what you feel down your dairy might help to cope with it.
- You can define a period (like 15 min) to read the news.
- Abstain reading news after you get up in the morning and before you go to bed in the evening.
- Try to balance the bad news with the good one. You can use listing options on tweeter and Facebook.
- You can benefit from the 'framing' method as follow: After reading tearing news you can imagine attaching a motivating development regarding this news (for instance news related to feminists' resistance about womens' killings) or your comment on the news which may keep your boats float.

# SOME ACTIVITIES FROM OUR WORKSHOPS



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# LETTER TO...



The letter activity aims to share the inspiration that was given to us by a specific person in a tough time in our lives through an act of solidarity or support.

It is also aimed that peoples' galvanizing each other by sharing their emotions and acts which they had while going through arduous undertakings in their life.

# THE ANGER ACCUMULATES IN MY BODY

IN THIS ACTIVITY, THE AIM IS TO FOCUS ON THE EMOTIONAL TENSIONS STEMMING FROM THE RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS BY TURNING BACK TO THOSE MOMENTS IN MEMORY.

Firstly, participants randomly write down the political developments that happen recently on a whiteboard. They are given time to 'enter in' their emotions flow from these shocking and tearing developments, they are supposed to observe their mind and body as wide as possible.

Subsequently, through the guidance of the facilitator, some specific bodily exercises are practiced to feel the accumulation of all these emotions and shake their body remarks out.





# THE MIRROR IN MY GARDEN

After a detailed assessment of authoritarianism with its' personal, ideological, and societal levels, the activity called "the mirror in my garden" is applied.

Participants are guided to imagine themselves in a garden where they feel safe and free. Shortly thereafter, they are invited to meet with themselves in the garden to talk about their authoritarian tendencies. They leave the garden by hugging 'themselves' in promising –if they like– to think over on this and/or to initiate some changes in their lives.



## EXPLORE SOME PROJECT SAMPLES

- **Empowering Realities, University Collage Dublin Women Studies Programme, 2017**
- **Lubunyalar için Dayanıklılık Geliştirme Rehberi, <https://guclenmepratikleri.noblogs.org/>**
- **On Being Project, <https://onbeing.org/>**
- **Psychosocial Well-being for Human Rights Defenders in the Philippines, <https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=32584>, 2020**
- **Sabancı Üniversitesi Dönüştürücü Aktivizm Programı <https://sugender.sabanciuniv.edu/tr/d%C3%B6n%C3%BC%C5%9Ft%C3%BCr%C3%BCc%C3%BC-aktivizm-program%C4%B1>**
- **Santa Monica Civic Well Being Project, <https://santamonicawellbeing.org/about/wellbeing-project>**
- **Temporary International Relocation Initiatives And The Wellbeing Of Human Rights Defenders Project, <https://www.hrdhub.org/wellbeing>**
- **The Many Dimensions of Wellbeing, <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/research/research-projects/Many-Dimensions-of-Well-being/>**
- **The Well Being Project, <https://wellbeing-project.org/>**
- **The Barcelona Guidelines: supporting human rights defenders in temporary relocation, <https://www.openglobalrights.org/the-barcelona-guidelines-supporting-human-rights-defenders-in-temporary-relocation/>**
- **Uplefter, Cüneyt Çakırlar and Aylin Kuryel, A workshop on political depression, <https://vimeo.com/298840051>, 2019**
- **UK's independent body for wellbeing evidence, policy and practice, <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/>**

## FURTHER READING

# Authoritarianism, organizing, well-being

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Jaime L Napier 1, John T Jost (2008). Why are conservatives happier than liberals, Psychol Sci. Jun;19(6):565-72, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02124.x.

Lydia Alpízar Durán, Noël D. Payne and Anahi Russo (Ed) (1998), Building Feminist Movements and Organizations-Global Perspectives, ZED Books

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<https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp>)



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## SUGGESTED PRACTISES FOR COLLECTIVE WELL - BEING

### Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3nU44c5578&t=320s>

Be kind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eKoOoOTvgk>

### Breath Practice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZFAuMd0Au4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyB62rWTnWs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQmO54cE4E4&t=242s>

### Mantra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxNPLZTo-G4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O68TWWzG5T4>

## SUGGESTED PRACTISES FOR COLLECTIVE WELL -BEING

Body Freedom and somatic Healing

Body-Based Healing: Somatic Healing Techniques,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uggSjuPzt8c>

Does Somatic Experiencing (SE) Work? SE practices for healing | Monica LeSage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UU7eSxcBhpM>

Body Movement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELNppge75AA>

A lesson in therapeutic dance movement

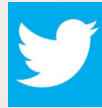
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRNS8XTADEU>

Creating an Ensemble

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FWAUncAvw4>



## **Social Media Accounts**



# **#Politikada İyilik Hali**

