

Surviving STEMM

As a marginalized human

By Stronger U



Surviving STEMM

What does a supportive space entail?

Evaluating if a place is supportive

What policies and practices exist for accommodations and needs?



How diverse is the leadership?



What are the retention rates?



What work / life balance is supported?



Are there others with shared identity here?



What relationship building and support exists?



Are there mentorship and ongoing learning opportunities available?



Contributing to a supportive space

Connect with others; build community



Mentor others compassionately



Learn others' needs, consensually



Show up consistently



Advocate for changes, lead discussions, and start initiatives



Provide peer support and resource connections

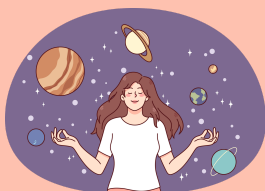


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Responding to the unsafe

Coping with harmful impacts of an unsafe space

Learn and practice activities that boost self care and healing



Learn and practice boundary setting



Find advocates, allies, professional helpers



Anchor yourself in groups or activities that provide support and structure



Reflect on and confront internalized messaging from harmful practices and any decreased sense of belonging



Release yourself from perfectionism, shame, or things that repeat harm



Manage your time in ways that brings you joy; take time to grieve losses as needed

Decide where you will speak up, and where you won't



Find meaningful ways to invest in your community



Explore where you might fight against barriers, versus where you might carve out alternative pathways



There is no right way to navigate an unsafe space. Whatever you choose to do, however you need to care for yourself, is okay. You deserve to make the choices that feel best aligned to you.



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Advocacy

Advocacy: How to advocate for ourselves?

Do research and learn as much as you can about what reasonable accommodations are, what kind of support you need, or whatever else is relevant to your advocacy. Become your own expert so that you can clearly communicate and explain what you need



If you need or have “proof”, **document it** to the best of your ability, whether that looks like writing down microaggressions or harassment that you’ve experienced, challenges that interfere with your ability to attend class and complete your work, or anything else relevant to you.



Practice saying no, asking for explanations, and re-stating what your needs are. There is often a lack of transparency in the reasoning behind denying accommodations or care, especially if that denial is not well founded.



Is there **someone else** who can back up what you say, do the labor of asking for better support, or help you to communicate? This might be a peer or someone from an aligned student group, and might also be a faculty member, therapist, case manager, legal aid, etc



Advocacy: When to advocate for ourselves?

Advocacy can be exhausting and fruitless at times, depending on the systems we’re fighting against. When we’re considering how to advocate, determining whether or not we do want to advocate can also be a relevant question. Here are questions to ask yourself to help gauge what might be best:

- What are the **consequences** of advocating right now vs not?
- What will it look like to figure this out on your **own**, versus with what you would gain from **advocacy**?
- Are there **alternative avenues** to turn to?
- Do you have the **energy** and **capacity** currently to advocate?
- What is the **likely outcome** of advocating? Do you keep hitting barriers? Is there possible support?
- Will it be more **dysregulating** to cope on your own, or to advocate and potentially face denial?
- Do you have a **support structure** to help you advocate, or to hold you emotionally while you do?



You know yourself, your identity, and your needs. Trust that knowledge. You deserve to exist and take up space just as you are. You don’t need to shrink yourself. You belong here, and your humanity does as well.





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Mental Health Resources

Community

- Support groups
- Meetups and events
- Forums / Discord / Slack
- Peer respites
- Mutual aid
- Advocacy
- Helping friends
- Volunteering



Frequently run by public or private services. May have various expectations or requirements for community belonging. Community care spaces may also exist for people with multiply marginalized identities.

Professional Services

- Therapists & Psychiatrists
- Medical providers
- Coaches
- Advocates
- Mentors
- Peer supporters
- Case managers
- Advisors



Licensed practitioners and other professionals are often found in public or private services. Services such as coaching, mentorship, and peer support may be found in private services as well as community care.

Self Help

- Books
- Zines
- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Apps
- Workbooks
- Classes
- Social media



Can often be found through connecting with others of shared experience, recommendations from practitioners, or online resource lists.

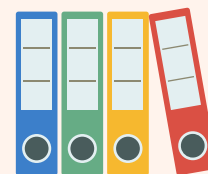
Common Sources

- **Public services:** often serve varied clientele; usually provide affordable care; often face larger bureaucracy and less funding access
- **Private services:** may serve targeted clientele, may have longer waitlists; may or may not have lived experience; varied governance; often have greater funding access
- **Community Care:** centered in mutual aid and lived experience; interdependent resource structure; may be self-governed; may have less funding access
- **Self-generated:** activities or practices that we engage in for self care and/or resources that we access to increase our self awareness



Resource Databases

- Crisis & academic resources: <https://thrivelifeline.org/resources>
- Non-carceral resources: tinyurl.com/noncarceral-resources





Where do I go next?

Resources like this one are in our shop!

- Suicidality and Complex Trauma Support Seekers Guides
- Non-Carceral Support Mini-Course
- Building Community Care Fundamentals
- Peer Support for Multiply Marginalized Communities

Fill out a project request form for organizational projects or workshops, such as:

(strongeruwellness.com/project-request/; Interactive workshops; modifiable to 2 - 4 hours)

- Healing or Harnessing: Considering a Matrix of Mental Health
- The Art of Becoming Human

Gain personalized support:

- Free Stronger Together Discord: strongeruwellness.com/services/stubborn-survivors/
- Donation-Based Peer Support meetings: strongeruwellness.com/events-calendar/
- Book a Discovery Call: calendly.com/strongeruwellness-info/discovery-call
- Workshops: strongeruwellness.com/services/workshops

Join our Patreon for more coping guides, deeper discussion, weekly practices, and a dedicated community of care: <https://www.patreon.com/cw/CareFullPractices/>

Listen to our CareFull Practices Podcast for conversations on creating the care we want to witness in this world (Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and other platforms)

Stronger U partners with THRIVE Lifeline, a nonprofit 501(c)(3). We use a revenue sharing model, donating funds, peer support, and training to THRIVE, who provide free anonymous mental health and identity affirming lifeline conversations. Stronger U additionally partners with THRIVE using our services to provide paid opportunities to people from marginalized communities.

