Grassroots Tales: Journeys of Inward Healing and Outward Movement Building
“A story of youth development and healing”

Rooted in Liberation Psychology epistemology, this dissertation was engaged to liberate myself as well as psychology. Positing Healing Justice and Sociopolitical Development as theoretical guides, this dissertation explored a community specific approach of radical healing to develop urban youth’s abilities to sustain (build) spirit and collective hope for grassroot movement building. This dissertation asks, what are the possibilities of bringing urban youth (n=9) together who shared similar realities, dared to dream together (i.e., think tank), and turn those dreams into a Grassroot Movement Building?

The methodological praxis of this dissertation project was politically and theoretically situated to study learnings at the intersections of multiple urban youth experiences, generational knowledge, and community specific approaches to healing. A through-line finding of this dissertation project is the elicit methodological and praxis-based framing of intersectionality within youth development and healing-centered organizing. Critical ethnographic analysis of youth voice artifacts, supported by thematic coding, grounded theory analysis, and participatory methods yield six (6) key findings representing the big picture takeaways of human and healing centered youth organizing to build/sustain grassroots movement: 1) Wisdom from Ancestors and Elders to sustain youth development and healing; 2) Journeying – youth and their community learning they have the ability to heal each other and with each other; 3) Grassroots/Community Specific Rituals for Survival and Healing are important for healing youth in the process of building/sustaining movements (i.e., community and society development); 4) The Art of
Cultivating Vulnerability as Emotional Knowledge for Healing; 5) Hope and Spirit to Build/Sustain Grassroots Movement as energy needed to sustain healing, organizing, and interpersonal relationships along the journey (i.e., grassroots movement building and radical healing process); and 6) Building Grassroot Movement in itself was a source of personal and communal healing that spans across generations, identities, social context as well as the visible and invisible worlds.

Key words: Human Justice, Healing Justice, Sociopolitical Development, Healing-Centered Youth Organizing, Grassroots/Community Specific Approaches, Hope, Spirit (i.e., Ancestors), Radical Healing, Journeying, Grassroot Movement Building, & Vulnerability