

I AM WHY. YOUNG WOMEN
LEAD THE WAY TO JUSTICE

VIRTUAL CURRICULUM

1-1.5 hour *I Am Why* Virtual Workshop

WELCOME TO THE *I AM WHY* VIRTUAL WORKSHOP!

We developed *I Am Why*'s virtual workshop to ensure youth with system experience can share their voices as we collectively continue to fight for our freedom and health without the ability to gather in person. This workshop aims to center and uplift the voices of our youth. Here, we offer a workshop that may go deep into who we are, where we come from, what we've been through, and how we are feeling in this unique moment. Or, the workshop may be a space where we find ourselves diving into our creativity. It can be both—it is what we make of it. *I Am Why*'s Curriculum Team does want to disclose that holding and facilitating virtual space can be challenging at times, but it also has the potential to create powerful pieces that we can carry forward with us. Feel free to adjust the curriculum to the needs of your participants.

In Solidarity,

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WHAT YOU'LL NEED

As we begin this powerful and challenging undertaking, we need the right framework and tools to get started. Following are guidelines on the steps, supplies, and mindset necessary for a powerful workshop.

FACILITATORS

(CREDENTIALS ARE DIFFERENT FOR VIRTUAL VS. IN-PERSON SPACES):

As the guiding force of these workshops, facilitators play a critical role. Here are the key credentials in selecting facilitators:

- One of the facilitators should be someone who has been through the system you are focusing on, or who is from the given community
- The facilitators should be well oriented in holding space when tensions can run high and people are feeling vulnerable
- Facilitators should have researched *I Am Why* and be familiar with our goals
- Facilitators should create their own PicsArt image prior to the workshop so they familiarize themselves with the app
- There should always be an extra facilitator for screen sharing and support
- Facilitators should do their best to be in a quiet space while facilitating

SUPPLIES

- Facilitators should all join by iPad, Chromebook or computer (rather than cell phone), if possible, in a quiet space with reliable Wi-Fi
- Participants can join with a phone, or can use a phone for PicsArt and join the virtual workshop through another device
- Prior to the workshop, participants should be instructed to download PicsArt (a free app) or Adobe Photoshop's free app
- Participants should be provided with a link to the overview video from *I Am Why's* website: <https://iamwhy.org> or facilitators should be prepared to show the video via screen share

ENTERING THE VIRTUAL SPACE (5–10 MINS)

Welcome participants as they enter. Introduce yourself and ask whether they have downloaded PicsArt or Photoshop and ask them to do so if they haven't. Give participants about five minutes to get settled in. Play some music.

GETTING SETTLED AND GROUNDING/CHECK-IN (10 MINS)

ASK ALL PRESENT ON THE CALL TO SAY:

- Their name
- Their pronouns (e.g., she/her/hers or they/their/theirs)
- Where they are calling from
- And your choice of Check-In Question

When we lead check-ins for our in-person workshops we ask everyone present to sit in a circle and they pass the question around the circle. In a virtual workshop you can ask people to pass to someone. This has worked best for us, but does at times require the facilitator to step in and remind participants of who has already gone. You can also have participants 'popcorn' the answer—jumping in when they're comfortable.

CHECK-IN QUESTION OPTIONS:

Checking in and out is a chance to hear everyone's voice. It is important to know how the group is feeling—to get a sense of what people are thinking and everyone's energy. This can be particularly difficult in virtual workshops. Checking in opens up the space and allows folks to represent where they are from. Some people aren't naturally talkative, so this is a structured and productive way for them to be involved in conversations. Checking in is also an important community-building process for everyone in the group to get to know each other. In virtual workshops this is an especially important component—to hear the voices of those who may join without video and to engage them in conversation.

- What is one emotion that sums up how you feel about everything that is going on right now?
- or
- What is one emotion that sums up how you feel in the present moment?

INTRO TO PROJECT (5 MINS)

- Introduction to *I Am Why* or to the social issue that group will be addressing
- Video on *I Am Why*'s homepage: <https://iamwhy.org>

TWELVE-WORD AUTOBIOGRAPHY ICEBREAKER (5-10 MINS)

ESSENTIALIZING THE SELF:

Your life story right now in 12 words (ask participants to write down on paper or on their phones)

1. In 120 seconds (two minutes) write 12 words that represent you at this current moment
2. Take 60 seconds to cross out six words
3. Everyone who wants to should be invited to share their six remaining words
4. Take 60 seconds to cross out three words
5. Take 10 seconds to cross out two words (so only one word remains)
6. Invite everyone to share the one word they have left

WRITING OF *I AM WHY* STATEMENTS (10-15 MINS)

Screen share the *I Am Why* posters and statements that you find most compelling on our website at <https://iamwhy.org>

Here are some open-ended questions you can use to guide participants in looking at the artwork:

- Is there one art piece in particular that you are drawn to? Why? What makes it strong or intriguing?
- Are there any *I Am Why* statements that stand out to you? What is compelling about these statements?

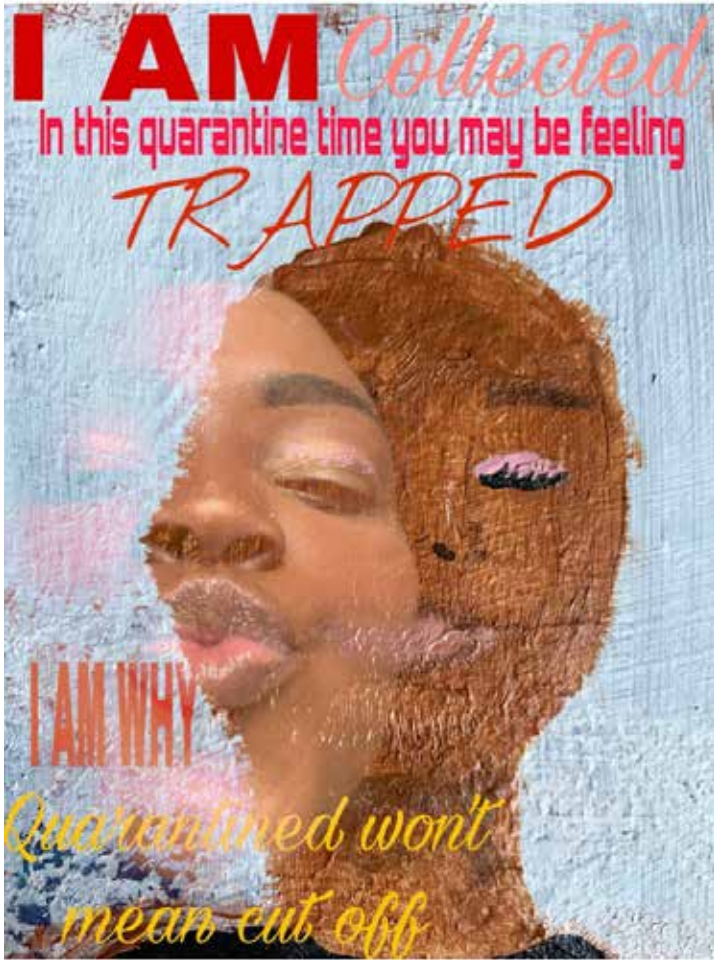
'*I AM WHY*' WRITING EXERCISE:

We like to have the following on a PowerPoint to screen share while participants are writing:

- **I am** _____ (Insert a positive quality you have. This can be the word from your *Essentializing the Self* exercise.)
- Why is this quality important to you at the moment? To your survival during this time we are living through? _____
- ***I Am Why*** _____ (What changes do you see for society? This is about people connecting with you as a fellow human being. This is your statement about this moment in time.)

Invite participants to share their statements.

EXAMPLES OF I AM WHY PICS ART IMAGES



EBONY WALCOTT



BRIANA EVANS



ALONDRA ARAGON

ART-MAKING (20-25 MINS)

Screen share the PicsArt image that you have created as preparation. Or you can use the examples provided or find more on *I Am Why's* Instagram posts. Check out posts here: <https://www.instagram.com/iamwhyjustice/> from May 2020. One facilitator should screen share from their phone and walk participants through the process of altering a photo with PicsArt. Also, just encourage everyone to play around with the app as you screen share.

FINDING A PHOTO:

- Open up PicsArt on your device
- Don't subscribe, don't pay, just press the "x" to close that box
- Choose a photo from your photos that you want to use (press +, find photo) or take a selfie

CROPPING:

- Walk participants through the different tools for cropping
- Walk participants through how to crop the photo as if you are cutting it out with scissors in the app (see Alondra's example)

BACKGROUND:

- Share how you can upload different photos from your library or online to add to the background (see Ebony's examples; Ebony used a painting she had created as her background and Alondra used a photograph she had taken of a plant growing out of concrete)
- Play around with effects to get the image you want

BORDERS:

- Share the different border options (see Briana's example)

TEXT!!

- Walk participants through adding their *I Am Why* statements to their PicsArt image (sometimes participants work on this after the workshop and send us a final image via text when it's completed)

SHARE!

- Post your work to Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/iamwhyjustice/> with your *I Am Why* statement, and tag @iamwhyjustice and #iamwhyjustice

CHECK OUT (5-10 MINS)

CHECK-OUT QUESTION:

- What is one thing you wish to see as a result of what is happening right now?

The *I Am Why* curriculum team is eager to help you plan for your virtual workshop, assist in facilitation, or just to hear about your experience. Send us a note at info@iamwhy.org and let us know your thoughts. Onward!