

# 3.3 Healing Justice & Self-Care

*Brief explainer on non medical/non legal healing practices*

Somatic or body-based healing, creative expression, and spiritual, religious, and cultural healing practices foreground forms of recovery from sexual violence that move beyond narrowly clinical, psychological, or juridical frameworks. They recognise trauma as embodied, social, and culturally embedded, often exceeding what can be processed through speech or formal therapy alone. Practices that engage the body, including movement, exercise, breath-work, and sensory grounding, support survivors in restoring bodily autonomy, regulation, and a sense of safety after profound violation, this also involves the will of the survivor or the close ones to the survivor and a support system.

Creative modes such as writing, visual art, music, performance, and storytelling offer non-linear ways of processing trauma. They allow survivors to externalise pain, work through fragmented memory, and reclaim authorship over their experiences without pressure to conform to dominant narratives of victimhood or recovery. Spiritual and religious forms of healing, including faith-based rituals, prayer, collective worship, and support from religious communities, offer moral guidance, hope, and a sense of communal belonging. Within this, liberation theology and justice-oriented spiritual traditions can be especially significant, reframing survival not as private suffering but as part of broader struggles against structural violence, patriarchy, and impunity.

Healing through community conversations, shared testimony, and awareness-building initiatives further situates recovery within collective processes. Dialogues, support circles, and public engagement challenge silence and stigma while enabling survivors to be heard on their own terms. Together, these embodied, creative, spiritual, and community-based approaches centre dignity, agency, and relational care. They function alongside legal and therapeutic interventions, expanding the possibilities of healing in ways that are culturally resonant, politically conscious, and grounded in collective solidarity. These practices are mostly considered in addition to the legal processes of creating accountability or for survivors who make the choice not to complain or come out about the abuse.

## Resources

- Self Care Practices for Survivors
  - <https://clevelandrapecrisis.org/resources/resource-library-2/featured/creative-writing/>
  - <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1933482/>
  - <https://www.svri.org/mind-body-approaches-for-healing-after-sexual-violence/>

- Columbia University's Compilation <https://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/resources-healing-resilience-readings>
- University of Illinois Resource Toolkit <https://wrc.illinois.edu/survivor-support/survivor-resources>
- Career guidance for school dropouts and sexual abuse survivors  
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/career-guidance-for-school-dropouts-and-sexual-abuse-survivors/article35362503.ece>
- Kerala Government - Standard Operating Procedure For The Effective Implementation Of Sexual Assault Survivor Scheme And Prison Mentoring Scheme Of Victim Rights Centre  
<https://kelsa.keralacourts.in/rules/VictimRightsCenter.pdf>
- Kerala Government - Medico-Legal Protocol for examination of sexual assault survivor  
<https://arogyakeralam.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Kerala-Medico-legal-Protocol-for-Examination-of-Survivor-of-Sexual-Offences-2019-compressed.pdf>

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