Healing, Self-Care, and Youths' Civic Leadership



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In the past decade, a growing number of youth organizing and leadership groups have engaged low-income youth of color to address social disparities through grassroots organizing, advocacy, and public education. Many of these groups have incorporated healing and self-care practices to promote the well-being of their members as they work toward positive community change. These practices aim to address some of the emotional trauma, stress, and other challenges that contribute to poor mental health among young people of color. Summarizing findings from surveys, focus groups, 200 in-depth interviews with youth leaders, and over three years of participant observations, this presentation demonstrates how healing and self-care practices are correlated with an array of self-reported leadership, health, and other developmental outcomes. This research builds on a theoretical understanding of how community-based organizational structures and practices can advance health and well-being.