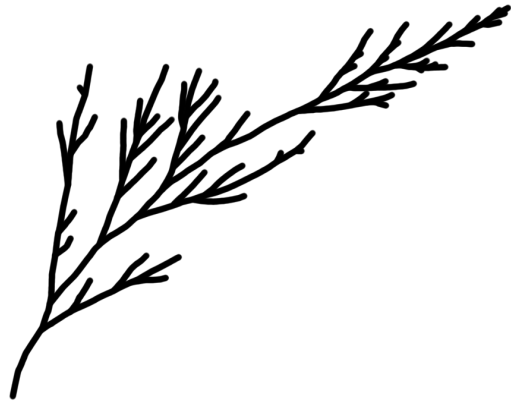


COUNTABILITY



The Indigenous Ally Museum Practitioner Toolkit

By:

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REPRESENTATION



RELATIONSHIP



STEWARDSHIP





What is This?



This toolkit was developed in conjunction with my dissertation, *Adversaries into Allies: A Call to Action for Turning Settler Colonial Museums into Indigenized Spaces*. This toolkit is based on findings from a qualitative research study that included museum site visits and conversations with museum practitioners. This research found that Indigenous community members need allies within museums to feel safe, seen, and welcome in spaces. This toolkit's goal is to help the next set of museum leaders, decolonizers, and accomplices learn to look at their institution and work critically, and enter into a space of allyship for Indigenous communities.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be a series of reflective exercises. It will challenge the user to think critically about the settler colonial museums they currently work in or want to work in, and look at how to make the changes needed to move into a place of allyship. This toolkit is designed to be done through multiple sessions, not in a single-session. This toolkit can be a personal or group reflection.



Aztalan State Park in Jefferson, WI (2019)



Museum Evaluation Tool

(Page 1 of 3)

Museum Name: _____

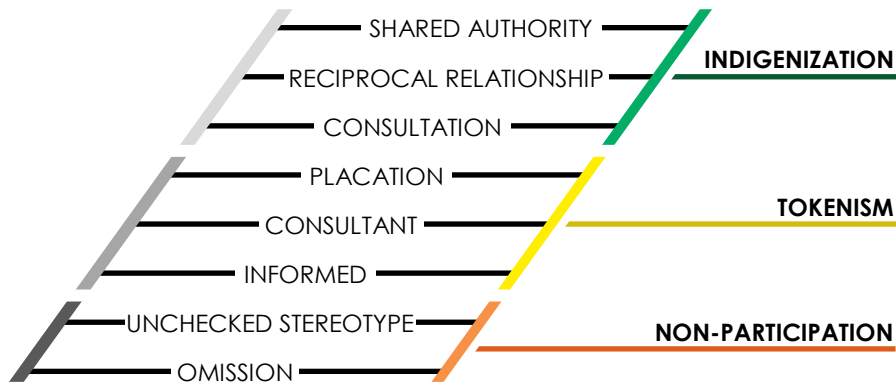
Date of Visit: _____ Time: _____ Admission Cost: _____

1. Were there examples of Fryberg and Eason's (circle all that apply):
- Omission (not there)
 - Commission (Stereotypes/misconception)
 - Authentic Representation

2. Overall, did the museum cover the 3 prongs of Decolonization according to Lonetree:

- Privileging Native Stories Collaborating with Native Communities Truth Telling

3. Where in the Ladder of Engagement did this museum fall (Circle):



4.a) Was there a land acknowledgement?

- Yes No

4.b) Was there Action behind the land acknowledgement?

- Yes No

4.b) Was it in a prominent place?

- Yes No

4.c) Land acknowledgement notes:

5) Was the Indigenous Content throughout the museum or limited only to one area?

- Throughout Limited

6) What topics did the Indigenous exhibit(s) cover?





Museum Evaluation Tool



(Page 2 of 3)

7.a) Did they work with Tribal partners in the exhibit(s)?

- Yes
- No

7.b) Did they name what partners they worked with (List below, or "N/A")?

8.a) Were the labels written in first person or third person?

- First
- Third

8.b) From which lens were the labels written?

9) Was there any mention of NAGPRA work?

- Yes
- No

10) How did the Museum display Native artifacts and objects?

11) How did the Museum bring in further education or connections to Indigenous communities?

12) Was there any examples of traditional knowledge or community knowledge being shared in the exhibit?

13) Were their elements of harm-reduction or trauma informed practice?

- Yes
- No

14) Were there Indigenous languages used in the museum space?

- Yes
- No

15.a) Did the Gift Shop have Indigenous materials?

- Yes
- No

15.b) Were they ethically sourced?

- Yes
- No

15.c) Were they appropriate to have?

- Yes
- No





Self Audit

(Page 1 of 2)



This tool is to help you evaluate your institution. Take time to think critically and be candid. Your answers will help with your action plan.

1. Where, if anywhere, are Indigenous stories being told at my museum?

2. In what tense do we use when discussing Indigenous people? Are we only using the past?

3. Does my museum have ancestors or belongings in its holdings?

Yes No

4. Do we have any sacred items or cultural items that should be back in the community on display or in our holdings?

Yes No

5. Do we acknowledge all Indigenous people of our lands or only a select few?

All A Few

6. Do we acknowledge the role our museum, or all museums, played in colonization?

Yes No

7.a) Do we actively work with Indigenous community members?

Yes No

7.b) What does that relationship look like?

7.c) Is our relationship only transactional, meaning our only interactions are paying them for programming or paying them for providing a one-time only stamp of approval?

Yes No

7.d) Do we only talk to Indigenous community members about NAGPRA?

Yes No

7.e) Do we actively give Indigenous community members decision-making powers?

Yes No

7.f) Where can we add Indigenous people to the decision-making table?



Self Audit

(Page 2 of 2)

8. Do we have any Indigenous staff members?

- Yes
- No

9.a) How is my museum showing action beyond just acknowledging whose land we are on?

9.b) Are we joining Indigenous people in activism?

- Yes
- No

9.c) Are we participating in land back or repatriation efforts?

- Yes
- No

10. Are we paying our community partners who help with content?

- Yes
- No

11.a) Do Indigenous people feel safe in our space?

- Yes
- No

11.b) If not, how do we make it safe? If it is already safe, how do we make it even safer?

12. Whose ancestral and historic land are we on and how do we engage with them?

13.a) Do I consider my museum to be decolonized?

- Yes
- No

13.b) What makes you say yes or no?

















14.a) Do I consider my museum to be Indigenized?

- Yes
- No

14.b) What makes me say yes or no?

Conversation Starters

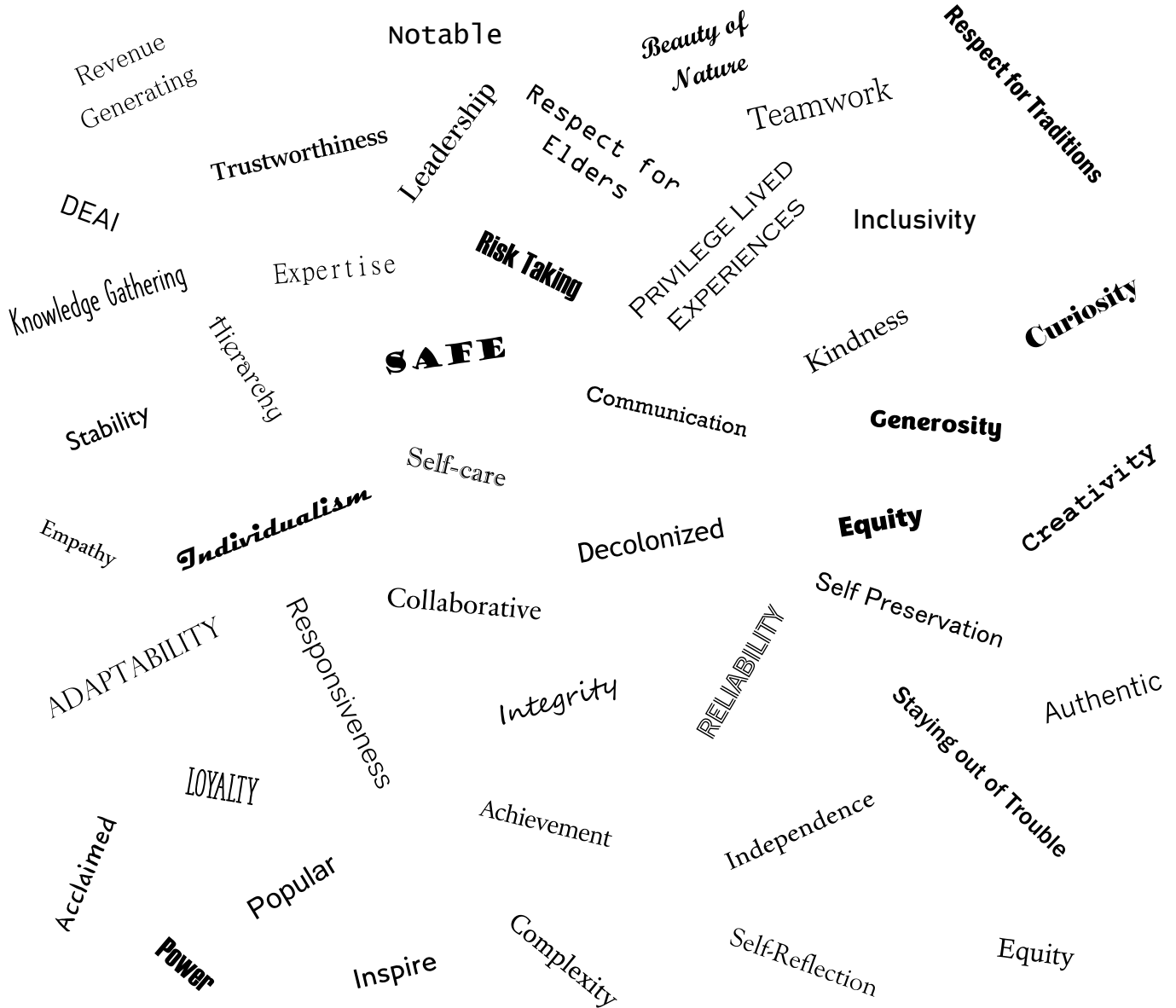
These small cards are supposed to be used to start critical conversations at museums to address colonial structures, oppression, and inequity that harm Indigenous in museums. Cut them out and bring them to your next meeting or decision-making brainstorming session.

  REPRESENTATION How do we counter the museum narrative that Indigenous people only lived here in the past?	 REPRESENTATION What are we doing to ensure Indigenous resiliency and joy are being celebrated at our museum?	 REPRESENTATION What stereotypes are we perpetuating through our exhibits, programs, and collections that reduce Indigenous people to myths?
 REPRESENTATION Who is making decisions about how we talk about Indigenous people? Do they have the right to make these decisions?	 ACCOUNTABILITY Do we hold something in our collections that we shouldn't? Is there something we need to consider reuniting with its home community?	 ACCOUNTABILITY What harm is there in returning collections to the communities from which they were taken? Why do museum professionals feel the need to keep something that does not belong in the museum space?
 ACCOUNTABILITY If we had a painting of a sacred ceremony, would we display it? It could give insight into a community but could also be inappropriate to share outside of its proper cultural context.	 STEWARDSHIP What do we sell in our gift shop that perpetuates harm or stereotypes to Indigenous people?	 STEWARDSHIP How have we acted as gatekeepers to Indigenous culture and lifeways?
 STEWARDSHIP How do we re-educate museum visitors who have been taught stereotypes about Indigenous people?	 STEWARDSHIP Is our museum a place of healing or harm? How do we know?	 RELATIONSHIP How is the museum supporting Two-Spirit Individuals in our space, to feel safe, seen, and heard?
 RELATIONSHIP How am I giving room for BIPOC individuals at the Museum? Am I speaking over or for them? Or do I let them have the megaphone?	 RELATIONSHIP Who has the power at our museum? How do we message that to our visitors?	 RELATIONSHIP Who are our closest Tribal communities? Have we contacted them? How often have we contacted them?



Establishing Your Values

Values are incredibly important to ourselves and the institutions we work at. Our guiding sense of morals often compose our “core values” – what makes us, us, and keeps us going on those hard days. Spend some time with the values on this page, or you can create your own. What are your core values? Circle what you believe your core values are (try to pick five).



Institutions often have core values, but sometimes, their praxis does not match the values on their websites and walls. Take a moment and underline what you believe your institution's core values are in praxis (try to pick five). How do they compare to yours? Are you working in a place that shares your values, or no?

Often, our values are in conflict with each other, even within ourselves. How can we reconcile that when doing social justice work?





MUSEUM INDIGENIZATION LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT

On the following page you will find the *Museum Indigenization Ladder of Engagement*, which has been created for this toolkit based on the ladder of civic participation introduced by Sherry Arnstein. This ladder serves as a roadmap on how to move museums into a place of Indigenization.

TOKENISM NON-PARTICIPATION

Starting at the bottom of the ladder is Non-Participation, meaning there is no participation with Indigenous communities. This section is comprised of the following characteristics:

- Omission — Your museum has no Indigenous content.
- Unchecked Stereotypes — Your museum might talk about Indigenous people but the presentation is rooted in stereotypes. As an example, this could include only representing Indigenous people in the past.

The next section is Tokenism, which is when Indigenous people are involved but not in an equitable way. This section is comprised of the following characteristics:

- Informed — You may let Indigenous communities know they are represented in the museum without asking for or listening to their input.
- Consultant — Your museums might hire one Indigenous person to give their input or give a “rubberstamp” approval to their programming or exhibit.
- Placation — Your museum pays “lip-service” to Indigenization, meaning that your institution might listen to Tribal or Indigenous partners, but do not make the changes needed to transform into an Indigenizing space.

INDIGENIZATION

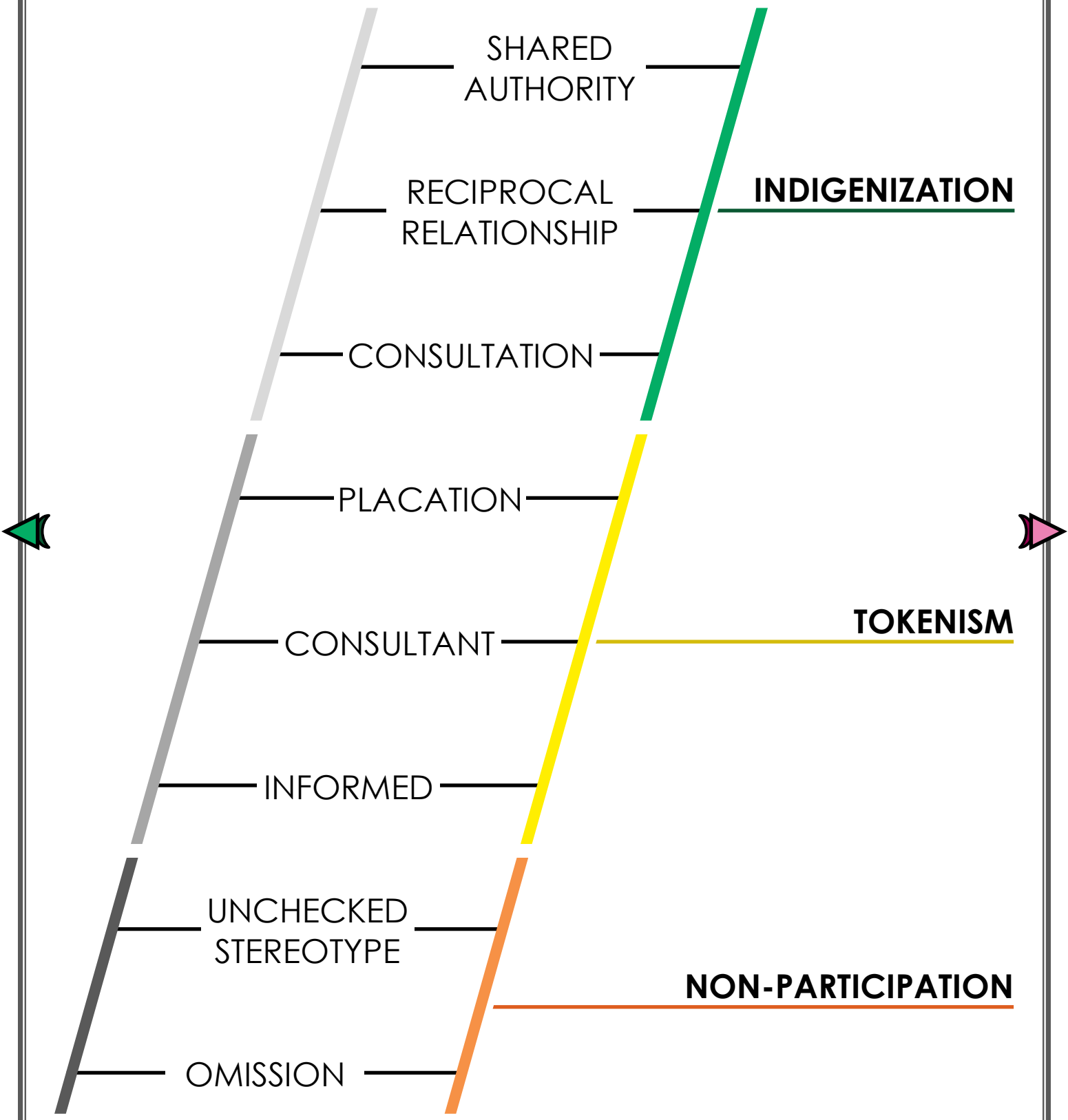
The last section is Indigenization, which means you are centering Indigenous people at your museum. This section is comprised of the following characteristics:

- Consultation — Your museum regularly sits down with Indigenous partners for conversations on how to bring Indigenous content into the museum or what objects to return in the collection.
- Reciprocal Relationship — Your museum and the Indigenous community help each other and have a two-sided relationship that is based on trust and respect.
- Shared Authority — Your museum is willing to include Indigenous people at the decision-making table or curate an exhibit in their space.

This ladder of engagement shows how museums currently interact with Indigenous communities and what is required to move up the ladder to develop better relationships with Indigenous community members.

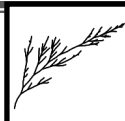


MUSEUM INDIGENIZATION LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT





Create an Action Plan



Final Activity

Description: _____

Stakeholders (People/Departments): _____

Realistic Timeframe (Circle One):	Days	Weeks	Months	Years
Cost (Circle One):	Negligible	Minor (Existing Budgets)	Medium (New Budgets)	Major (Fundraising)

Previous Activity #1

Description: _____

Stakeholders (People/Departments): _____

Realistic Timeframe (Circle One):	Days	Weeks	Months	Years
Cost (Circle One):	Negligible	Minor (Existing Budgets)	Medium (New Budgets)	Major (Fundraising)

Previous Activity #2

Description: _____

Stakeholders (People/Departments): _____

Realistic Timeframe (Circle One):	Days	Weeks	Months	Years
Cost (Circle One):	Negligible	Minor (Existing Budgets)	Medium (New Budgets)	Major (Fundraising)

If you run out of room on this sheet, please continue elsewhere using your preferred method!





Self Care:

Doing justice work, or heart work, is hard. Ensuring that people are seen as full people and not stereotypes or misconceptions can be a challenge. But it's worth it. And more museum workers and visitors of color need allies like you to ensure their voices are being heard, and they are represented in the spaces we occupy.

Take breaks in the work. Go for walks. Have conversations with other allies. Find the beauty in art. Do not work too hard; you will burn out. We have only one vessel, and only when that vessel is overflowing can we help others. What will you do to overflow your vessel?

I challenge you to make something beautiful. A doodle, a poem, a collage in the space below and keep it as a reminder to take time for you. The work will always be there.

