

Charter

NAME

The name of the organization shall be Boston Liberation Health Group

MISSION STATEMENT

The Boston Liberation Health Group builds, disseminates, advocates for, and practices Liberation Health theory via bi-directional clinical practice, direct action, and community building in order to support socialist liberation, dismantle all forms of oppression, and promote the healing of our selves and communities.

VALUE STATEMENT

The Boston Liberation Health Group believes in healthcare that is: **holistic**, situating individuals' problems in their full matrix of personal, cultural, structural, institutional, and ideological determinants; **critical**, refusing to accept neoliberalism and refusing to accept the notion that social work ought to subordinate itself to the neoliberalist social agenda; **empowering**, seeking to liberate clients and social workers from the confining belief that current conditions are inevitable and beyond our power to change, seeking to support their becoming active allies of individuals and movements working for social change; **hopeful**, rescuing the memory of and valuing "the collective human capacity to create change." We believe that health is a world without war, borders, police states, or socio-economic classes; where there is equal access to natural resources, the means of production, and the fruits of humanity's labor; where our cultural, racial, and sexual diversity is respected; where we care for, protect, and sustain our planet; where each person has the food, housing, healthcare, and education they need to thrive; and we believe that health is participating in sustained mass movements to bring this new world into being.

AIMS

The aims of the Group shall be to...

- Heal people by healing society and heal society by healing people
- Create an alternative to oppressive models of healthcare
- Study and contribute to existing Liberation Theories, including but not limited to: Liberation Theology, Liberation Psychology, and Liberation Health Theory
- Support each other in the practice of Liberation Health, build community, and celebrate and enjoy each other
- Offer support and solidarity to anyone engaged in the struggle for liberation, particularly activists and organizers from oppressed or marginalized groups
- Disseminate and educate healthcare providers and consumers in the theory and methodology of Liberation Health
- Participate and lead direct actions against injustice and in support of the

- health of our communities, particularly in solidarity with oppressed peoples
- Encourage and support the founding and operation of other Liberation Health Chapters
- Dismantle capitalism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, transphobia, ableism, ageism, ethnocentrism, stigma
- Build collective liberation worldwide

DESCRIPTION

The Liberation Health Group is open to all advocates of social justice and human liberation involved in the struggle for a healthy society. We understand “health” as more than the absence of disease and are committed to addressing the personal, cultural, and institutional barriers that prevent us from being healthy!

Members of our group work to better understand liberation health theories and methodologies in the practice of client empowerment. We strive to link immediate issues and struggles relating to our current healthcare system to the larger societal structures that regulate it and the dominant worldview messages that rationalize the existing unjust allocation and distribution of resources and services.

As healthcare workers and clients, we recognize the need to ally with our comrades who are experiencing oppression, here in Boston, and around the world. Our solidarity with the individual clients, families, and communities with whom we work means recognizing their right to meaningful participation in the health decisions that affect their lives.

We propose and fight for alternative forms of social organization that promote a more just distribution of natural and human resources and a healthy society that prioritizes human needs over accumulation of capital and profit. We identify with the oppressed, dominated, and marginalized of the world and their struggles to achieve economic, political, and cultural freedom and self-determination.

POWERS

To further these aims the Boston Liberation Health Group shall have power to:

- (a) Obtain, collect, and receive money or funds by way of contributions, donations, grants, and any other method towards the aims of the Group.
- (b) Associate healthcare practitioners, ally organizations, and healthcare users in Boston and New England in a common effort to carry out the aims of the Group.
- (c) Do all such things as will further the aims of the Group.

MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Membership shall be open to anyone who supports the aims of the group
- (b) Members may attend and participate in all Liberation Health events, gatherings, and online discussions
- (c) The Steering Committee shall have the power to terminate the membership of any member via unanimous vote when said member's membership is understood to be detrimental to the Boston Liberation Health Group or unduly dangerous to other members of the Group, provided that the member shall have the right to be heard by the committee and have their hearing witnessed by general members before a final decision is made
 - (1) Members agree to uphold the values of the group as stated above
 - (2) Members agree to practice anti-oppressive behaviors at Liberation Health events, gatherings, and online, including but not limited to: honoring and centering the voices and experiences of oppressed people and holding themselves and others accountable with love and solidarity, more here?.
 - (3) Members agree to challenge and educate themselves around the history of harm caused by capitalism, white supremacy, Imperialism, and hetero-patriarchy in order to better understand Liberation Theory and to support the struggle for liberation.
- (d) In the event of insurmountable differences, disagreements, or conflict between or among group members, the Steering Committee will observe a 4-step process:
 - 1. Receiving a verbal or written account of the conflict from any member of the group (this report could be made by one of the parties involved, or by another member of the group who witnessed the conflict)
 - 2. Connecting individually with each member to gather information
 - 3. Convening the Steering Committee to discuss the conflict and determine whether to terminate the membership of any or all parties involved, or whether to proceed with reconciliation
 - 4. A reconciliation process informed by the needs of each of the members involved, and determined through conversation with them separately or together

MANAGEMENT

- (a) The Steering Committee (SC) is made up of no less than 3 and no more than 12 members who are unanimously invited to join by the current SC members and adhere to the principles of the SC
- (b) The Principles of the SC is are as follows:
 - 1. Participation
 - a. SC members will attend at least 8 of the 11 SC meetings each year, 6

of the 10 monthly meetings each year, and the annual SC retreat (barring extenuating circumstances).

- b. SC members will share their thoughts and opinions openly and with courage during SC meetings. They will also actively listen and create appropriate space for others to share, with a particular interest in creating safety and space for members of oppressed groups
- c. SC members will be active contributors in social justice movements in the spirit of intersectionality
- d. SC members will actively represent the Boston Liberation Health Group publically by volunteering for running meetings, attending actions, running trainings, tabling, providing healthcare, etc., as needed, and as meets their ability and comfort
- e. SC members will actively recruit appropriate new members for Boston Liberation Health
- f. SC members will respond to emails and other online communications within a reasonable time frame (no more than 3 days)
- g. SC members will act as trainers and facilitators for general meetings and as chairs of all working groups

2. Inclusivity

- a. SC members will actively contribute to creating an environment within the Boston Liberation Health Group, the Social Work and Healthcare provider communities, Boston, the United States, and our world, of inclusion, tolerance, empathy, and freedom, with a particular attention in building the above for members of oppressed groups
- b. SC members will help to recruit and sustain a diverse membership for the Steering Committee, Boston Liberation Health Group and for the Liberation Health network
- c. SC members will act to invite, welcome, learn from, and educate new members to the BLH group, particularly when those members express an interest in learning more
- d. SC members will treat others with compassion and will seek to resolve differences with each other, with BLH members, and with all people whenever open dialogue is possible

3. Solidarity

- a. SC members will use their skills and training to act in solidarity with all people in the struggle for liberation, and in particular with members of oppressed groups
- b. SC members will be available and committed to members of the Boston Liberation Health Group when called upon
- c. SC members will put the goals and interests of the Boston Liberation Health Group ahead of their own

4. Mastery

- a. Liberation Health theory and practice
- b. Leading by example (taking the leadership role seriously)
- c. Protagonism (being an active contributor to BLH and other social justice movements)

- d. Engages with opportunities to continue learning and developing Liberation Health theory
- e. Ability to be in solidarity with people across difference
- f. Uplifting oppressed people
- g. Adhering to the values of: anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, anti-white supremacy, and anti-heteropatriarchy

(c) The SC shall have the power to terminate the status of any SC member via $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote when said member's membership is understood to be detrimental to the Boston Liberation Health Group or unduly dangerous to other members of the Group, provided that the SC member shall have the right to be heard by the SC and have their hearing witnessed by general members before a final decision is made.

(d) The SC shall meet at least 11 times each year.

(e) Quorum: At least 3 SC members or 75% of SC members (whichever is greater) must be present at a SC meeting to be able to make decisions. Prior to voting, insight and feedback should be sought from all current members either in person or online.

(f) The SC will strive to take action on behalf of the Boston Liberation Health Group (including endorsing events and alliances) via consensus whenever possible, when such action is deemed to further the goals and interests of Boston Liberation Health. In the event that consensus cannot be made and a decision needs to be made in a timely fashion, the SC may make decisions by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.

(g) A proper record of all transactions and meetings shall be kept.

(h) The SC may amend the constitution via unanimous vote during any SC meeting.

(i) Any SC member may take a leave of up to 6 months (consecutive or disparate) every 3 years, after which they may resume their membership on the SC.

(1) The member requesting leave must inform at least one other SC member of the anticipated start of their leave and their best guess for the length of their leave.

(2) Current SC members will fill in any roles left vacant by the member on leave.

(3) Leaves longer than 6 months or more frequent than once every 3 years will result in a review by the current SC members before the member may resume serving on the SC. SC members may re-invite that member to the SC by unanimous vote.

(j) The current SC will fill in any roles left vacant by the member on leave.

(k) If the steering committee falls below 3 members, the SC will appoint a temporary member or invite a new member. In the case of being unable to reach 3 SC members, a special general meeting shall be convened to determine the future of the group.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

- (a) An Annual Public Meeting shall be held within 12 months of the date of the adoption of this constitution and each year thereafter at the beginning of the organizational year (Sept)
- (b) Notices of the Annual Meeting shall be published four weeks beforehand and a report on the Group's financial position and important governance matters from the previous year will be made available at the same time.
- (c) A Special General Meeting may be called at any time at the request of the SC, or not less than 10 members. A notice explaining the place, date, time and reason shall be sent to all members by the SC three weeks beforehand.
- (d) One third of membership or eight members being present, whichever is the greater, shall enable a Annual Public Meeting to take place.
- (e) Proposals to change the constitution must be given in writing to the SC at least 28 days before a general meeting and approved by unanimous vote of SC
- (f) An annual SC retreat will proceed the annual public meeting to discuss governance and issue a report, review and amend the charter, vision for the next year.

ACCOUNTS

- (a) The funds of the group including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the SC. All checks drawn on the account must be signed by at least two members of the SC.
- (b) The funds belonging to the group shall be applied only to further the aims of the group.
- (c) A current record of all income, funding and expenditure will be kept.

DISSOLUTION

- (a) The Group may be dissolved by a resolution passed unanimously by the SC during a Special General Meeting. If Quorum cannot be reached because there are not enough SC members, the Group shall be dissolved.
- (b) If confirmed, the committee shall distribute any assets remaining after the payment of all bills to other charitable group(s) or organization(s) having aims similar to the Group or some other charitable purpose(s) as the Group may decide.

Signed October 1st, 2017

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