

We take care of us:

A Mutual Aid Social Therapy approach to putting mental health tools in the hands of political activists in Berlin

Abstract

Mutual Aid Social Therapy (MAST) is a continuously evolving political experiment. It is a mutual aid approach to community mental health, developed by anarchist social workers in the United States, in which therapeutic tools are shared, learned, and practiced together. MAST Berlin or ‘Sozialtherapie beruhend auf Gegenseitigkeit’ is focused on creating a space for communal mental health care for political activists in the Pro-Palestine movement in Berlin. Pro-Palestine activists in Berlin are subjected to police violence and intense political repression for protesting the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people of Gaza. In order to resist these state violences, and continue advocating for a Free Palestine, MAST Berlin works to put mental health tools into the hands of activists as a self-defense tool. This praxis project aimed to engage in abolitionist social work, operating outside of the state, to build on the growing knowledge and practice of mutual aid and community care. By caring for one another’s mental wellbeing, and learning to do so without relying on carceral mental health and social work systems, we strengthen our ability to engage in political action and resistance.