



Joy as Resistance

Employee Handbook and Organizational Operations Guide

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I. Welcome

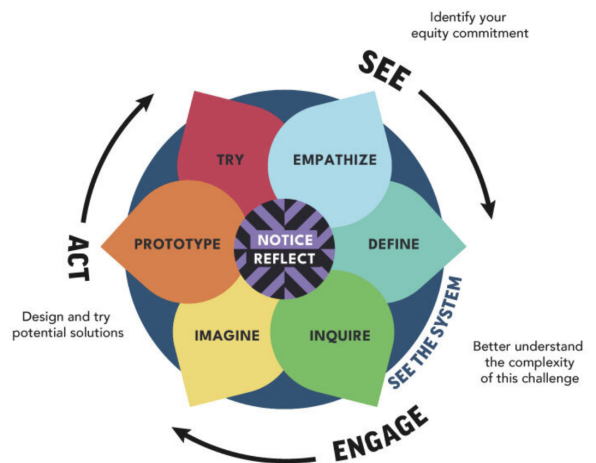
Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of the Joy as Resistance Handbook is to describe how the Joy as Resistance team operates. It describes our foundational ideas, values, and culture, and serves as a guide for how we seek to collaborate with one another. The primary uses of the Handbook are 1) conveying to potential and new team members what guides our work and 2) serving as a touchstone for current team members to guide our work. The Handbook is a living document that will evolve over time as we learn and grow.

History and Guiding Commitments

Joy as Resistance was founded by and with our queer community. At each stage of the process we have followed a [liberatory design framework](#) centering queer youth as the experts. Founder and Executive Director, Bre Donnelly (all pronouns), grew up as a queer person in Castle Rock, Colorado, and has spent their life observing how the gaps in our education and healthcare systems intersect with systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism. The results of these inequitable systems are a lack of diverse resources, choice, and agency for youth. In their position as a school social worker, Bre explored and experienced daily how this lack of resources impacted students in the Greater Denver area and Aurora. Bre continuously heard from students and families that mental health resources that were affordable, accessible, and affirming to LGBTQIA2+ youth simply did not exist. Bre talked with students, teachers, therapists, coaches, parents, healers, administrators, psychiatrists, and community members to design and co-create each piece of our model. Liberatory design is a guiding force behind our dedication to iteration and community. We also recognize that, as Trish Adobea Tchume says, “Liberation is 1,000 little experiments, not models.”

NATIONAL EQUITY PROJECT Liberatory Design for Equity Process



April 2021



Bre conducted four [pilots](#) between November 2019 and March 2020 and upon the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the message was clear: queer youth need mental health support now more than ever. So in August of 2020, in collaboration with the Joy as Resistance Board of Directors, community, and a few key funders, Bre was able to launch Joy as Resistance full-time.

Queer youth are essential members of our community and deserve more resources that celebrate and affirm their identities as they grow and develop. Joy as Resistance supports queer young people by equipping them with mental health services and inclusive spaces that focus on liberation and healing. These services include individual counseling, therapeutic group work, and mentorship through our program Big Queer, Little Queer. We also offer professional development, consultation, and customized support to K-12 schools and nonprofits to improve organizations' inclusive practices.

Joy as Resistance was also born from our observation and community feedback that reliable transportation is a significant barrier for youth in accessing quality mental health services and inclusive communities. We created our mobile mental health clinic, "Joyride," in order to address this need and increase accessibility and mobility of services for LGBTQIA2S+ youth. Joyride, a retired ambulance converted into an office space for healing, travels around Metro Denver to meet the needs of the youth we serve. No matter the location of services, we aim to increase resiliency, connection, hope, and joy for queer youth in Colorado.

The most updated version of our overview slides is located [here](#).

One-liner: Joy for the present, hope for the future.

Mission: Joy as Resistance exists to increase radically inclusive spaces and communities for queer youth. We do this by offering individualized mental health services and mentorship, and by equipping educators, families, and community partners with services and strategies to implement in every space occupied by LGBTQIA2S+ youth.

Vision: A world where LGBTQIA2S+ youth feel essential, celebrated, and empowered to live their authentic lives.

Values: Joy, authenticity, community, and liberation are our four core values.

Joy

- ★ Joy is a stepping stone to hope. Even when the work isn't finished and when tragedy, grief, or tension are present, joy is always available. Valuing joy means we are prioritizing self-care, pleasure, celebration, and fun. We know that access to joy is not experienced equally, and we choose to counteract the systems of oppression that exist to restrict joy. While many systems and services view youth and queer communities through the lens of their suffering, we center their joy.

Authenticity

- ★ We will never dull your shine. We practice living courageously, understanding that everyone gets to define what authenticity looks and feels like for themselves. In other words, you are always the expert of your body and your experiences. We sense and respond to how authenticity can change over time.

Community

- ★ We acknowledge and respect our responsibility to the past, present, and future. We acknowledge our connection to both people and nature. We practice inclusion, equity, giving, and receiving. We prioritize interpersonal connections that are supportive, enriching, and joyful. We ask, "how can we thrive in our communities, and how can our communities thrive?" We are independent, together.

Liberation

- ★ We ask, "how can we create a future that is irresistible?" We value freedom, choice, and autonomy, and are motivated by love and abundance rather than fear and scarcity. Every day, we reflect upon and resist the ways White Supremacy Culture and colonialism show up in our work and our lives. We acknowledge when we cause harm, and engage in an accountability process to work toward repair, growth, and change. We honor our interconnectedness, and we believe that no one is free until we are all free.

Culture and Core Practices

Just as we seek to support radically inclusive, equitable, and responsive communities for queer youth, we seek to do the same within our organization. It is important to us to align how Joy as Resistance operates internally with the world we hope to see externally. We do not seek to operate like a conventional organization. Put simply, we reject operational models based on competition, choosing instead to focus on our mutual reliance on one another and the quality of our relationships. We believe in the power of symbiotic communities as means to counteract not only White Supremacy Culture, but colonialism, capitalism, and other oppressive systems.

The concept of shared leadership has always been and continues to be a guiding framework for us at Joy as Resistance. We believe this path is necessary to counteract white supremacy, colonialism, and patriarchy. Our vision of shared leadership is inspired by the abundance of interdependence, a mutual dependence among living things, found in natural systems. For example, as Kat Young describes in adrienne maree brown's [Emergent Strategy](#), "*when Canada geese are migrating, they take turns at the front of the V - turns being the leader, the weight-carrier, and being the follower, the rester.*" We return to this example often as it illustrates our belief that no one is more important or powerful than anyone else here at Joy as Resistance - we are each powerful in our own ways and scopes.

Joy as Resistance was founded upon the belief in what is possible when we create the space for each of us to bring our full selves to the table. We practice authenticity, vulnerability, and generosity in order to nurture trusting, loving relationships with each other and the communities we serve. We've come to understand that our work requires openness, willingness, and recognition of the risk of exposure to harm. In order to engage in this work, team members must consent to being in vulnerable relationships with one another and willing to engage in conflict resolution and relational repair when harm occurs.

By taking this path, we knowingly embrace uncertainty, experimentation, and the challenge of trying to do things in a new way. To ground us in shared leadership and interdependence, our core practices are emergence and self-management. While these don't cover everything we do, they serve as the frame for how we work. They are not rigid and static "rules" to follow but instead offer us a fluid, guiding framework that we all live into and explore over time.

Core Practice #1: Emergence

We love author, activist, social justice facilitator, healer, and doula adrienne maree brown's [Emergent Strategy](#), in which Nick Obolensky states, "emergence is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions." We incorporate brown's core organizing practices in [Emergent Strategy](#) as much as possible in our work. These inform and guide our culture in action:

- Small is good, small is all. The large is a reflection of the small.
- Change is constant. Be like water.
- There is always enough time for the right work. There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.
- Never a failure, always a lesson.

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- Trust the People. If you trust the people, they become trustworthy.
- Move at the speed of trust.
- Focus on critical connections more than critical mass—build resilience by building relationships.
- Less prep, more presence.
- What you pay attention to grows.

Core Practice #2: Self-Management

We have begun to formalize a practice of self-management as described in [Reinventing Organizations](#), by Frederic Laloux. Joy as Resistance seeks to avoid top-down authority or conventional power structures. Our organizational chart doesn't look like a pyramid and we default to empowering each of our team members to make their own decisions whenever possible. Through self-management, we seek to emulate living systems where nature creates incredibly productive, complex, and beautiful systems that operate without centralized control.

Joy as Resistance team members have clear roles, responsibilities, and commitments but they are not centrally managed and controlled. Four systems allow us to work this way:

1. [The Roles Process](#)
2. [The Advice Process](#)
3. [The Conflict Engagement Process](#)
4. [Radical Transparency](#)

Supported by these four systems, every Joy as Resistance team member is free to act without supervision as they work to bring energy to their role(s). We acknowledge that Joy as Resistance is early in learning about how to fully practice self-management and may not have fully realized our ideals in this area. In particular, we still have certain authority held by our Executive Director and Board of Directors that may someday be fully decentralized as we figure out how best to do so.

An important learning from the initial roll out of these processes is the concept of proportionality. We regularly have interns, contractors, and community partners who move our work forward and influence our direction. Because of the time-limited nature of their Roles (both in hours per week and duration of stay), it is to be expected that they will be involved in decision-making in relative proportion to their Roles and time commitment.

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Contributors to our work beyond our Core Staff, such as interns, contractors, and community partners, may be stakeholders for some decisions made using the Advice Process, in which case their Advice will be solicited and considered. Feedback will be appreciated but is not required for decision making. They may also find themselves party to conversations regarding organizational decisions that mostly impact the Core Staff. In these instances, these conversations should be treated as an opportunity for learning and observation of our organizational process.

Group Norms

We use the following norms to guide our interactions with each other, especially during group conversations and meetings. These norms support our effort to embed racial equity into the fabric of our culture, relationships, and processes. We work to hold ourselves individually accountable to these norms and commit to holding each other accountable as well.

These norms are an amalgamation of both antidotes to White Supremacy Culture and practices that each of us has seen function well in other spaces. When facilitating meetings or workshops with/for external people, we invite participants to opt into a version of these norms, indicated by an asterisk.

- Make space, take space.*
- Use “I statements” to speak from your own perspective.*
- Use one mic.*
- Practice consent.*
- Lean in. Honor “challenge by choice.”
- Practice confidentiality. Leave the story, share the lesson.*
- You don’t have to understand everything to be able to accept and celebrate something or someone. Celebrate nuance. Accept non-closure. Practice curiosity.*
- Use a “yes/and” approach over “either/or.”
- Name the power, interpersonal, or other dynamics at play for the group.
- Hold both content and process. Less prep, more presence.
- Take care of your needs.*

II. Governance and Accountability

Organizational Structure

As described above, Joy as Resistance is working to reimagine organizational structures and practices to center equity and operate in ways that put our values into action. As such, we are actively experimenting with different ways to conceptualize and visualize our organizational structure as we work to practice self-management.

The key players in the organizational structure are the Board of Directors, the Core Staff, part-time staff and contractors, and our constituents.

The **Board of Directors** provides key fiduciary responsibilities in alignment with nonprofit law, acts as the primary accountability holder for the Executive Director, and provides an extra layer of oversight to catch and address problems. Individual board members function as ambassadors for the organization, helping increase visibility and access to resources.

- The Board of Directors is legally bound to the following three duties, to be executed to the best of each individual's ability:
 - "Duty of Due Care" – Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will; provide oversight for all activities that advance the nonprofit's effectiveness and sustainability.
 - "Duty of Loyalty" – Make decisions in the best interest of the nonprofit corporation, not in the board member's self-interest.
 - "Duty of Obedience" – Ensure that the nonprofit obeys applicable laws and acts in accordance with ethical practices; ensure that the nonprofit adheres to its stated corporate purposes, and that its activities advance its mission.

The **Core Staff** refers to any person who is hired to work more than 20 hours per week at Joy as Resistance for more than six months. Core Staff have specific rights and responsibilities related to decision-making and governance as described in this document and in corresponding organizational policies.

The **Administrative Circle** creates the context in which other work areas function sustainably and in alignment with the mission. They oversee day to day operations, integrate learning from past programs, challenges, and changes, and cast the organizational vision and strategy. This work area also includes external communications, development, and financial planning. This

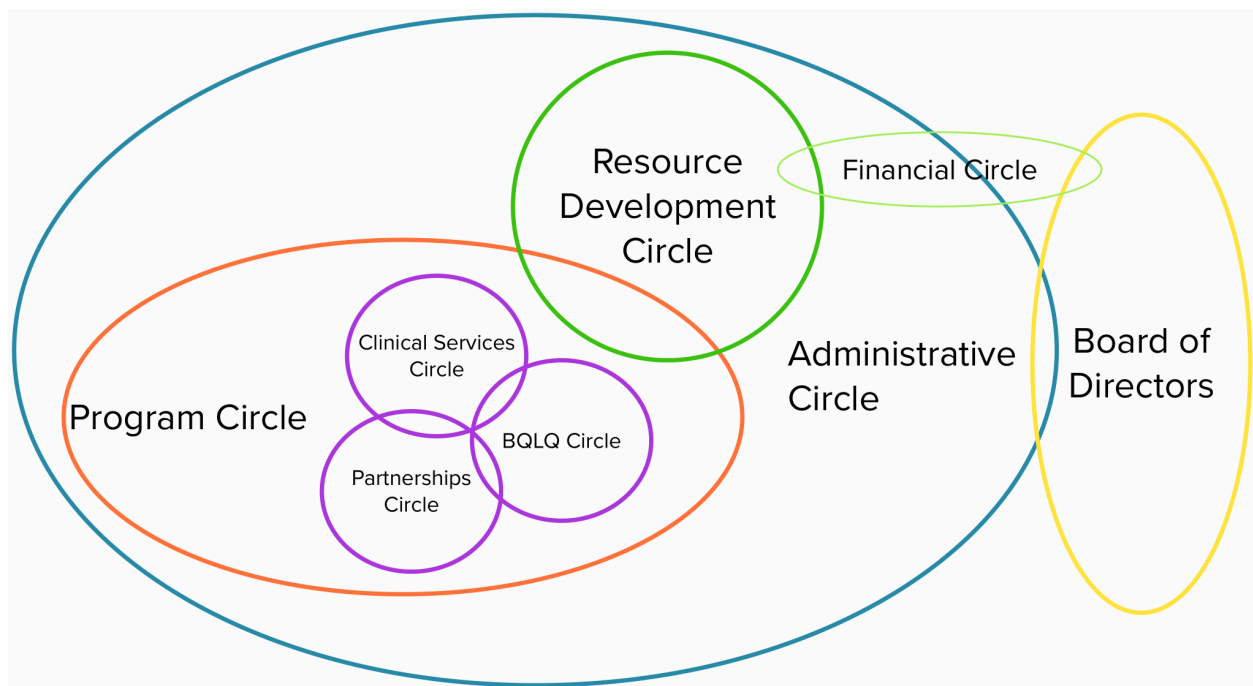
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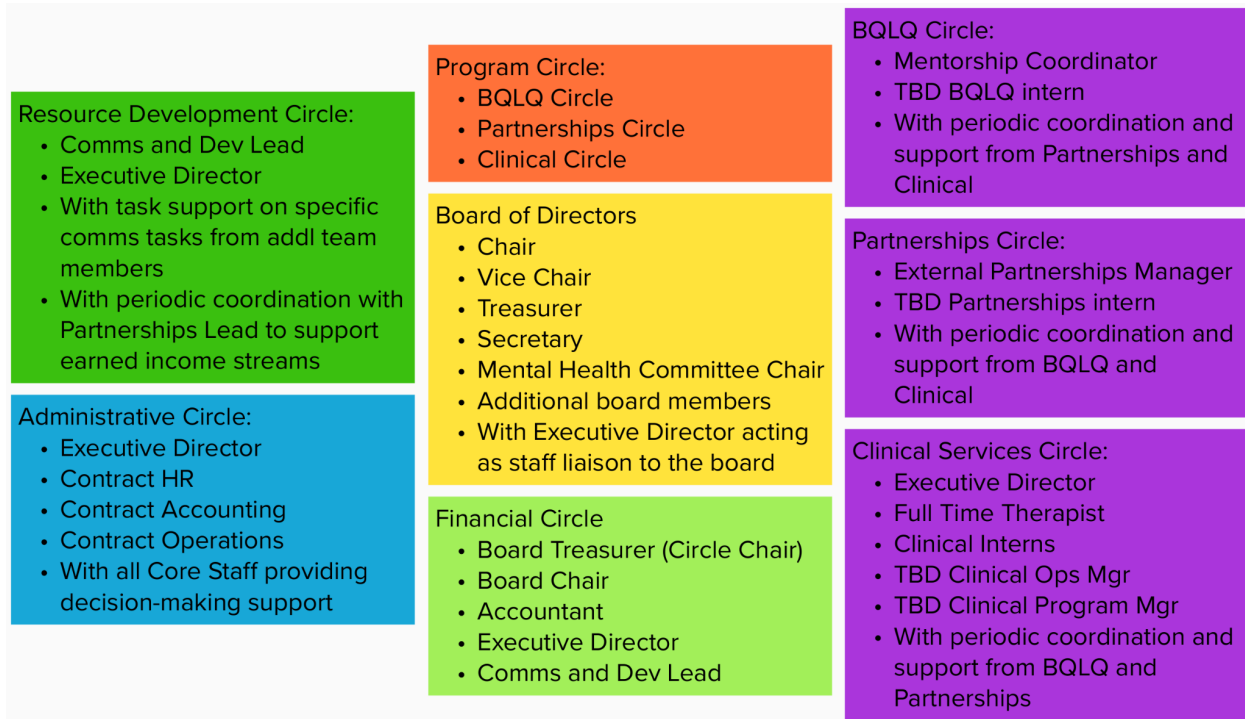
work area is further supported by contractors and continues to evolve as the organization grows and programs expand.

The **Program (or Impact) Circle** focuses on the planning and delivery of the organization's core services. Currently, programs include Big Queer, Little Queer, Joyful Spaces, and Clinical Services. This circle is composed of Core Staff from each program area and focuses on supporting program quality, coordinating recruitment and outreach efforts, and ensuring strong mission and strategic alignment across all services.

The **Resource Development Circle** work ensures financial viability for the organization in alignment with our vision, mission, and values. They use communications strategies that clearly communicate our mission and create pathways for relationship with our programs and organization. An engaged and well-informed community of supporters increases our ability to secure sustainable, diversified resources to fund Joy's work.

Visual Representation of Key Organizational Groups





Performance Accountability

Joy’s accountability mechanism consists of two complementary processes: the day-to-day task management system informed by our work plan and roles process, and quarterly **Sense and Respond Days** during which feedback on longer-term performance occurs. These systems are separate from clinical supervision, which is specific to the clinical team.

Day-to-Day

Using the Roles Process as a foundation, each staff person is responsible for developing and effectively utilizing a work plan. Our work plans are living documents based on our baseline metrics as an organization and tailored by each individual to their work area, vision, and style. Each work plan should have a yearly scope and consist of program level goals, strategies, time-bound metrics, and at least 1 self care goal. Each staff member will be paired with their peer coach or triad, designated upon hire. Interns will serve as each other's peer coaches. We are currently piloting a [peer mentoring](#) structure in which coaching pairs or triads meet at least bi-weekly to engage in collaborative problem solving, provide progress updates, adjust work plans, and/or give and receive feedback. It is also expected that all staff keep an updated version of their individual work plans linked [here](#) and to regularly update the org-wide goals they are responsible for.

Everyone has different definitions of performance, which is why we use the work plans and organization-wide baseline metrics to ensure clarity and alignment. Your peer coach should know your work plan and your current progress and support you in being accountable to the goals set forth. It is our hope that the majority of constructive feedback happens in this space as you build a relationship of respect and support. See the [Conflict Engagement Process](#) in our "core practices" section for details on how conflict regarding performance will be addressed if targets and expectations are not being met.

Collective and Seasonal

The Joy as Resistance team and Board of Directors commit to regular planning, action, reflection, and adjustment to support continuous improvement, learning, and accountability. At this time, we are testing the following practices to provide opportunities to pause, reflect, and plan together for collective accountability.

We view feedback as a gift, even if it is not always in the "best" or expected packaging. It is a part of our organizational culture (as outlined in our norms) that everyone is free to give and receive feedback whenever needed - these structures simply provide designated times to focus on feedback specifically. Before engaging in feedback, all staff are encouraged to explore the additional resources linked at the bottom of the article: [5 Tips for Giving Feedback](#) from The Management Center. Additional opportunities to explore nonviolent communication and effective feedback can be provided upon request.

All staff are expected to fill out this [highlight reel](#) for any teammate four times per month. At least two of these need to be for your peer coach to ensure consistent documentation of impact. This provides transparency and accessibility across the organization, while distributing the work of accountability amongst the team, ideally each person will receive the most feedback from the people who work closest to them.

Quarterly Sense and Respond Day Structure

- **Seed and Soil - January**
- **April - Germination**
- **July - Growth**
- **Harvest - October**

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Compliance with Nonprofit Law

Joy as Resistance is registered with the federal government as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. This means that both the federal and state governments recognize our charitable purpose and do not require that we pay taxes on our revenue. In exchange for this benefit, we commit to abiding by certain legal requirements and limitations on our activities. All Core Staff will either read [this document](#) or [watch this video](#) in order to become familiar with these legal requirements and limits. All staff shall inform the Executive Director about any activities that they believe would bring up questions related to legal compliance.

III. Operations

Hiring

Joy as Resistance's policies regarding hiring new staff include the following:

1. **Qualities we seek:** We will seek staff with the following qualities, and we think very carefully before hiring a Core Staff member that is lacking in any of the following:
 - a. Kindness and warmth
 - b. Strong commitment to economic, racial, and environmental justice
 - c. Strong written and oral communication skills
 - d. Good time management and task management
 - e. Diligence and attention to detail
 - f. Honesty, integrity, and humility
 - g. Sense of humor
 - h. Tech savvy or quick to learn new technologies
 - i. Independent, self-motivated
 - j. Self-confident
 - k. Works well with others
 - l. Flexible and open-minded
 - m. Works well in a variety of settings (remotely, office, events, legal cafes, meetings)
 - n. Willing to take on a diversity of roles within the organization, per Joy as Resistance dynamic system of assigning roles
 - o. Not strongly driven by a desire to get fame and attention
 - p. Sees work with Joy as Resistance as more than a job; sees it as a way to live what they love

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- q. Values the “unconventional” nature and outlook of the organization, including Joy as Resistance’s mission, communication styles, governance, and operational structure.
2. **Objecting to hires:** We will not hire someone if any Core Staff person believes that hiring the person would harm the organization or take Joy backward in its mission.
 3. **Deciding when to conduct a formal search:** Except when we feel that it is in Joy’s best interest to hire from among our volunteers and interns, when Joy has a position to fill, we will do a formal search for candidates by posting the job opportunity on our website and a reasonable number of listservs or job boards for at least two weeks, but preferably longer. In deciding whether it is in Joy’s best interest to do a candidate search or hire internally, we will weigh considerations that include:
 - a. how quickly we need to fill the position
 - b. how much time staff would have to take away from other work in order to screen applicants and interview candidates
 - c. how well we know and how much we have worked with the volunteer or intern that we are considering hiring
 - d. whether the position that we are hiring for requires such specific skills and knowledge that a broad search would be less fruitful.

Background Checks

All applicants who are offered employment with Joy as Resistance will complete a background check either by Joy as Resistance or a third party vendor. Joy as Resistance will review the relevant background information to select and retain the most qualified employees with the end goal of maintaining a safe and productive work environment. Reports will be maintained confidentially in employee files. This policy applies to the criminal history screening of prospective and current employees.

Joy as Resistance will conduct all third party background checks in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), other applicable federal and state laws, and Company procedures. [Click here](#) to review the full Background Check Policy.

Additionally, all volunteer Mentors for Big Queer, Little Queer consent to a background check that includes: Social Security Number Trace, Sex Offender Registry Search, Nationwide Criminal Databases Search.

Results of all background checks are reviewed only by Core Staff with decision making authority and are kept confidential.

At-will Employment

Unless otherwise defined in an employment contract, all employees at Joy as Resistance are “at-will employees”. This employment status allows the employee or Joy as Resistance to immediately terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without advance warning, and with no subsequent liability. Termination of employment may happen for good or bad cause, or no cause at all, and employees are free to leave the employment of Joy as Resistance with or without cause. Any representation by any Joy as Resistance officer or employee contrary to this policy is not binding upon Joy as Resistance unless it is in writing and is signed by the Executive Director with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Employee Classifications

All employees of Joy as Resistance will be classified as either full-time or part-time, and either exempt or non-exempt. We may also hire consultants and/or temporary employees.

Full-time employees: Full-time employees are those who are scheduled to work the full academic year and who work 35 hours per week, or more. All full-time employees are eligible to participate in the benefits program. This classification is considered “Core Staff” for the purposes of organizational decision making processes.

Part-Time Employees: Part time employees are those who work fewer than 35 hours per week.

Exempt: Joy as Resistance employees will abide by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in determining whether an employee is exempt or non-exempt. Employees classified as exempt are not eligible to receive overtime pay.

Non-exempt: Joy as Resistance employees will abide by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in determining whether an employee is exempt or non-exempt. Employees classified as non-exempt are eligible to receive overtime pay.

Consultant/1099: Consultants are independent contractors who work under a consultancy agreement. Consultants have no employee status and are not eligible for benefits.

Temporary Employee: Temporary employees are hired to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not imply a change in employment status.

Interns

Joy as Resistance believes that labor on behalf of the organization should be financially compensated when possible. As such, we do not hire unpaid interns and endeavor to pay a competitive stipend or salary within budget constraints. Interns are classified as Temporary Employees.

Volunteers

Volunteers are crucial for Joy as Resistance to deliver on key programs and succeed in our mission. Volunteers bring needed skills, connections, insights, and energy, and provide a critical connection between Joy as Resistance and the communities we serve. Joy as Resistance and staff who host and supervise volunteers have an obligation to act as responsible stewards of the skills, energy, and time that volunteers bring to the organization. We work hard to create thoughtful structures and processes to manage volunteer time and abilities and direct volunteer energies to effectively advance our mission. When we can, we offer honorariums and recognition for those who have stepped up as volunteers.

The following are two examples of how we engage volunteers in our work:

- Within our mentorship program, Big Queer, Little Queer, all Mentors choose to volunteer their time to serve as caring adults who support youth in the program. We appreciate volunteers' engagement with the community and their efforts in building a joyful, hopeful, and strong community.
- Within our resource development efforts, volunteers serve important roles in the planning and implementation of fundraising, community engagement events, and other outreach efforts.

Workers' Compensation

Joy as Resistance maintains a workers' compensation policy that can be accessed should an employee be injured while on the job. To assure proper protection for employees and Joy as Resistance, any accident that occurs on the job must be reported, even if there are no injuries apparent at the time. To report an accident, email the date, time, and circumstances of the event to hr@joyasresistance.org.

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As of October, 2021, our insurance provider is Pinnacol Assurance, policy #4226-481. For questions about our policy or to submit a claim, contact AP Intego at (866) 610-0063 or gustosupport@apintego.com.

Emergency and Safety Protocols

Weather Closure

Joy as Resistance will follow the Denver Public School District policy for weather-related closures. If the school district announces a delay of opening, closing, or early dismissal of students, Joy as Resistance will adhere to those same decisions.

Public Health and Infectious Diseases

Joy as Resistance will follow all CDC-recommended policies and procedures to manage public health risks. This could include limiting in-person activities or requiring masks, depending on CDC guidance.

Violence

Threats of violence or acts of violence are strictly prohibited. Employees threatening or committing acts of violence will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any such activity to your Executive Director or HR consultant via hr@joyasresistance.org.

Domestic Violence

Joy as Resistance recognizes that domestic violence can have an adverse impact on employee job performance and may also impact co-workers. Joy as Resistance will assist and support employees impacted by domestic violence, within reasonable guidelines. All information will remain confidential as long as the safety of others is not at risk.

Drugs and Alcohol

LGBTQIA2+ Coloradans often face challenges and barriers in achieving a healthy life. While queer individuals have many of the same barriers as the general population in accessing affordable and quality behavioral health care, additional unique barriers may include lack of understanding, discrimination, stigma, violence and higher rates of health problems, which can drive worse health outcomes. Queer youth and adults experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and use of substances like alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and other drugs.

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Joy as Resistance is first and foremost a youth-serving mental health organization. Joy as Resistance welcomes sponsorships from and partnerships with breweries, bars, cannabis retailers, or other businesses that buy, sell, and/or endorse alcohol or cannabis products. However, Joy as Resistance cannot promote events hosted by these businesses listed above or endorse their services or products. Joy as Resistance will not promote or endorse any businesses listed above on its social media channels, website, or in any written or digital external communications produced and/or distributed by Joy as Resistance.

The Joy as Resistance logo may be used in establishments that sell alcohol or cannabis, but it may not be used to endorse alcohol- or cannabis-related products or services. Our logo can be used on promotional material for events hosted by alcohol and cannabis retailers if specific language is used to make clear that Joy as Resistance is the beneficiary of the event and does not endorse any alcohol or cannabis product.

Joy as Resistance may host or attend fundraising events wherein alcohol is served. Employees and volunteers are expected to uphold Joy as Resistance values and act responsibly while consuming alcohol.

Alcoholic beverages and other recreational substances are never included in the Joy as Resistance budget and must always be purchased personally.

Company Property

Employees are responsible for Joy as Resistance equipment, property, and work products that may be issued to them and/or are in their possession or control, including but not limited to: credit cards, books/curriculum, fidget toys/sensory items, office supplies, printer, tabling materials/signage, technology products (sideline, zoom, acuity, therapy notes), codes and passwords, and intellectual property (e.g., written materials, work products).

All of Joy as Resistance' program materials and internal/external documents, plans, and templates in any form and however maintained, whether written, oral, on electronic or other media, are the property of Joy as Resistance. Staff currently use their personal computers and phones for communication purposes. We do not restrict their use of these items in any way but do expect that any confidential information be secured on these platforms in alignment with our policies. Overall, we trust staff to know what is appropriate and not appropriate.

Any physical items should be returned upon termination of employment and staff will lose access to any accounts and software after the completion of their last day.

Separation

Separation Terms

As stated previously, employees are employed at-will, meaning either Joy as Resistance or the employee may initiate separation at any time, with or without notice or cause. In the event of a voluntary, employee-initiated separation, we encourage employees to provide at least two weeks (10 business days) written notice prior. Separating employees will receive their final paycheck within 14 business days of their last date of employment in alignment with the scheduled regular pay period.

In the event of separation from employment, or immediately upon request by the Executive Director or their designee, employees must return all Joy as Resistance property that is in their possession or control. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law(s), Joy as Resistance may withhold from the employee's final paycheck the cost of any property which is not returned when required. Joy as Resistance also reserves the right to take appropriate legal action to recover or protect its property. Exiting employees are expected to maintain legal confidentiality requirements such as HIPAA protections even after their separation from the company.

Exit Interview Process and Options

We prioritize accountability and using feedback to improve our processes. As such, any time an employee voluntarily separates from Joy as Resistance, they are offered the opportunity to engage in one of the following processes to provide feedback:

- Engage in an exit interview conducted in-person or virtually with the HR consultant and an optional additional person selected by the exiting employee
- Complete a digital survey that includes all exit interview questions with responses directed to HR consultant

The HR consultant will summarize the feedback provided and share relevant information back to leadership.

IV. Staff Member Rights and Responsibilities

Equal Opportunity Employment

Joy as Resistance is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants, employees, and volunteers will not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, religion, national origin, citizenship status, disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, medical condition or any protected category prohibited by local, state or federal laws.

35-Hour Work Week

In an effort to create more space in our team members' lives, we practice a 35-hour work week. A typical work week for full-time employees generally consists of four, eight-hour days, Monday through Thursday, and one, three-hour day on Fridays.

While this is the typical structure, we also recognize that our work carries varying needs throughout the year. Full-time employees are expected to manage their schedules in such a way that accommodates these varying needs while also maintaining a strong boundary of not working more than 35 hours in a week whenever possible.

Subject to Executive Director approval and applicable law, employees may adopt flexible schedules that allow them to create healthy boundaries and work/life balance while meeting their goals and business needs of the organization.

Exempt employees will track hours worked on their own. In the spirit of radical trust, we assume that all exempt employees are staying within the 35-hour work week expectation. In the event that work commitments are not being met by a given employee, we will use the conflict engagement and performance accountability processes to address concerns related to underperformance or use of work hours.

Non-exempt, hourly employees are required to record hours worked daily. Non-exempt employees may not work overtime unless it has been approved in writing and in advance by their supervisor. Overtime pay will comply with the Colorado Overtime & Minimum Pay Standards (COMPS) Order.

Meal and Rest Periods

Joy as Resistance will comply with all federal and state regulations regarding meal and rest periods for non-exempt staff. Non-exempt staff members are entitled to an uninterrupted and duty-free unpaid 30-minute meal period for all shifts exceeding five consecutive hours. This unpaid meal period can be extended at the employee's discretion, provided that the time is made up later in the day or at another time during the week. How an employee uses their unpaid meal periods is at their own discretion.

Coworking, Remote Work

Staff are generally encouraged to work wherever they feel most successful and comfortable. We also recognize the importance of sharing physical space with each other, since it can create opportunities for personal interaction, collaboration, and relationship-building. Furthermore, we acknowledge that in-person meetings can become distracting or less effective if one or more people attend virtually. The following coworking policy seeks to balance the above considerations:

Policy: Staff will work from our shared office space an average of 14 hours per week, with 6-8 of these hours worked on Thursdays. Staff are expected to be reasonably available for, and attend in-person, weekly team time meetings.

Professional Development

Change is constant. The needs and opportunities within our community are continually evolving. The interests, career goals, and long-term development of our staff members are also continually evolving. On-going learning and engagement through professional development benefits both our employees and the community we serve. As such, Joy as Resistance prioritizes providing all employees with access to financial resources and paid time to participate in professional development (PD) activities.

Policy: The annual budget will include a dedicated line item for individual professional development expenses for Core Staff.. This amount may vary year-to-year depending on budget constraints. During annual work planning, each staff member will spend time with their peer support group or supervisor identifying individual development goals for the year and considering what types of PD will support those goals. Staff members are empowered to choose how to apply PD funds based on their individual development goals.

To manage this process transparently, staff members will complete the [Professional Development Request Form](#) to request PD funds. The form will be reviewed by the staff member's supervisor or peer support group. After attending a conference, staff are encouraged to share notes and important contacts as a deep dive during weekly team time or host a Coffee and Conversations (bi-weekly team time) to share key learning with the team.

When attending a conference that requires staff to miss significant office time or scheduled events, staff members should inform other staff of their travel plans via email and update the internal staff calendar.

Staff Expenses and Reimbursement

Certain expenses are considered automatically approved and do not require any action on the part of staff. These include:

- Expenses which are necessary for contract or grant deliverables and are factored into the budget for that grant or fee which Joy as Resistance has secured already (example: travel to speak at an event where Joy as Resistance is receiving a fee from the host specifically to cover travel expenses)
- Expenses which the staff team has decided to incur on an ongoing basis (example: office rent)
- Health insurance premiums, salaries, professional liability insurance, and other such recurring expenses that have been approved by the staff team are approved for the length of time determined by the staff team, or, indefinitely, if no timeline was decided by the staff team.

Joy as Resistance staff can request reimbursement for expenses incurred while doing their job, including travel expenses, meals while traveling or meeting with an important guest, office supplies, and professional development training. Requests for reimbursement should be made in a timely manner, using the processes set by the Financial Circle and in line with this policy. If there is a concern about whether a planned expense will be reimbursed, staff members are encouraged to check with the Executive Director prior to incurring the expense.

- **Expenses below \$50:** Use your best judgment. No approval needed. Just submit the reimbursement request by submitting receipts.
- **Expenses between \$50 and \$200:** Use your best judgment and check in with the Executive Director. If approved, submit the reimbursement request.

- **Expenses of more than \$200 but less than \$500:** Bring it as a proposal to the **Financial Circle**. The Financial Circle may approve the expense, or upon the request of any single Circle Member, it may pass the proposal on to the entire staff team.
- **Expenses of \$500 or more:** Bring a proposal to Team Meeting.

Mileage Expense Policy

Joy as Resistance will reimburse at the IRS-established mileage rate for staff and volunteers who use their own vehicle for Joy as Resistance-related travel. Travel by bus, train and other such forms of public transportation is strongly encouraged whenever possible.

Protections and Accommodations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodation

Joy as Resistance complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (as amended by the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act), and all applicable state and local fair employment practices laws and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities. Joy as Resistance will make reasonable accommodation for individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship to the organization or constitute a fundamental alteration or direct threat. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training.

If you require an accommodation because of your disability, it is your responsibility to notify the Executive Director. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- The reason you need accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help you perform the essential functions of your job.

After receiving your request, the Executive Director or other Core Staff member will engage in an interactive process with you to explore accommodations to support you in performing the essential functions of your job. Where appropriate, we may need your permission to obtain additional information from your medical provider. All medical information received by Joy as Resistance in connection with a request for accommodation will be treated as confidential.

If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, such leave may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave were permitted by state and federal law.

Joy as Resistance will not discriminate or retaliate against staff members for requesting an accommodation.

Religious Accommodation

Joy as Resistance honors, celebrates, and recognizes the diversity of religious beliefs. Employees may request leave to participate in a religious observance or request an accommodation for religious practice. In order to submit a request, an employee should email the Executive Director with the following:

- Date and/or time
- Duration of accommodation
- Plan to address any impacts on your ability to perform the essential functions of your job

The Executive Director will review the request. Possible outcomes of the review are approval or requested modification to the religious accommodation to the extent permitted by law. Some, but not all, of the factors that will be considered when making this decision are cost, the effect that a religious accommodation will have on established policies, and the burden on operations, including other employees.

Lactation Protection

Joy as Resistance supports breast- and chest-feeding parents by accommodating the parent who wishes to express milk during their workday. For up to one year after a child's birth, any employee who is breast- or chest-feeding will be provided reasonable break times to express milk.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Each year, employees will review and sign the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Whistleblower Policy

Joy as Resistance requires Board members and staff to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties. As representatives of Joy as Resistance, and

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stewards of its mission, we must comply with applicable laws and hold each other accountable to practice honesty and integrity as we work toward our goals.

Reporting Responsibility

Most workplace concerns can be addressed through the [Conflict Engagement Process](#). However, certain serious concerns, particularly those concerning financial matters and legal compliance, should be raised through this more formal channel.

It is the responsibility of all Joy as Resistance staff members to use this whistleblower process to report behaviors such as violations of law, misappropriation or misuse of funds, improper or undocumented financial transactions, other fraudulent matters, and activities creating a high likelihood of liability such as harassment, discrimination, slander, or intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The following are examples of violations that should be reported using the process below. The list is not exhaustive:

- a. Stealing or misappropriation of Joy as Resistance's funds, supplies, or other assets when amount is over \$20 or behavior occurs on a repeated basis.
- b. Fraud or deliberate error in the preparation, evaluation, review, or audit of any financial statement or accounting records of Joy as Resistance.
- c. Deviation from full and fair reporting of Joy as Resistance's financial condition.
- d. Deficiencies in or non-compliance with Joy as Resistance's internal accounting controls.
- e. Authorizing or receiving compensation for goods not received or services not performed.
- f. Pursuit of a benefit or advantage in violation of Joy as Resistance's conflict of interest policies.
- g. Unauthorized alteration or manipulation of the corporation's documents or computer files in violation of any of the corporation's records management and retention policies.

Engaging the Whistleblower Process

Review the complete [Whistleblower Policy](#) in order to understand the process of submitting a complaint and the full protections afforded to whistleblowers.

Anti-Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy

Joy as Resistance is committed to fostering a radically inclusive workplace that prioritizes joy, authenticity, community, and liberation for all members of our team. Therefore, Joy as

Resistance expects that all relationships among members of our team will be free of explicit bias, prejudice, and harassment.

Reporting Responsibility

As stated in the Whistleblower Policy, most workplace concerns can be addressed through the [Conflict Engagement Process](#). However, instances in which a person has experienced harassment, discrimination, or retaliation can - and often should - be raised through this more formal channel, [described in detail here](#).

The following are definitions of behavior covered by this policy:

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, “sexual harassment” is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment,
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes two types of sexual harassment: quid pro quo and hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual’s body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment: Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, or that of their relatives, friends or associates, and that:

- has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment,
- has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance,
- otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on company time or using company equipment by email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites or other means.

Engaging the Anti-Harassment and Nondiscrimination Process

Joy as Resistance encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe that they have been subjected to such conduct should discuss their concerns with the Executive Director or the HR consultant using the procedure described in detail in the full [Anti-discrimination and Harrassment Policy](#).

Personnel Files

Personnel records are the property of Joy as Resistance, and access to the information they contain is restricted and confidential. A personnel file shall be kept for each employee. It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify their supervisor by email of any changes in personnel data, including personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, names of dependents, and individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

V. Compensation and Benefits

Salary Compensation and Matrix

In March of 2022 our quickly growing team came together and decided that REAL embodiment of our values of shared leadership, equity, and shared decision making would require a radically different approach to compensation. Currently most nonprofits create their salary structures based on "comps" of similar positions for other nonprofits in the area. We all agreed that that system is rife with inequity and is incredibly dependent on the leadership, mission, and values of that org. We wanted to imagine something radically different so we held a series

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of staff meetings to imagine what it would feel like to know that each of us and each of our teammates was being compensated equitably and in alignment with our values and the world we want to see. The entire team read, *Holding Change* by adrienne marie brown to learn more about facilitating space and change at an organizational and individual level. Then we engaged in individual and team reflection about class, reparations, equity, and explored how fear and anxiety regarding talking about money comes from white supremacy and capitalist structures designed for competition instead of collaboration.

After exploring and researching many different models we found one we decided to try. We watched this [webinar](#) and explored the aligned implementation guide from Vega Mala Consulting. We then had a one day consultation with Vega Mala Consulting and were able to create the salary matrix you see [here](#). This is now the foundation of our approach to compensation.

We decided that we do not compensate for "performance.". Hopefully, this allows for the flexibility to be human, resists incentivizing over working or poor self care/boundaries, and also transparently compensates based on the values we hold as an organization. We implemented this compensation structure in early January 2023. The structure and performance of the Equitable Salary Matrix, as well as the specific Areas of Value included, will be reviewed and updated as deemed necessary by the team in the last Sense and Respond Day of 2023 in October.

Payday

Payroll is run on the 15th and the 30th/31st of each month. Payment should be received within 2-3 days if you are set up for direct deposit on Gusto. We do not currently issue any paper checks, and if this is your preference please discuss this with the Executive Director. Paystubs, tax reports, and records are located on your Gusto account and are attached to your personal email for use beyond your tenure with Joy as Resistance.

Pay Deductions

The law requires that Joy as Resistance make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes, Social Security taxes, and certain other taxes. Joy as Resistance also may be required or permitted by law to make other deductions such as for liens, garnishments, support orders, fraud or theft. Finally, there are deductions that employees authorize, such as premiums for insurance benefits. Employees who have questions concerning why deductions were made or how they were calculated should promptly contact the Executive Director.

Administrative Pay Corrections

Joy as Resistance takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday. Employees must carefully review their pay statements each payroll period to ensure they are being paid correctly. In the event that there is an error, employees must promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Executive Director so corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

If underpayments are identified, they will be corrected in the next regular paycheck. Overpayments also will be corrected in the next regular paycheck unless this presents a burden to the employee (such as where a substantial amount is owed). In that case, Joy as Resistance will attempt to arrange a schedule of repayments with the employee to minimize the inconvenience to all involved.

Adjustments to regular pay, such as deductions for unpaid time off, leave of absence and payroll advances, should be reflected on the paycheck for the following pay period.

Healthcare Benefits

Refer to our one-page healthcare benefits summary shared annually with staff during open enrollment or upon hiring.

Time Off Benefits

Guiding Principles

Joy as Resistance provides generous time off benefits in an effort to maximize employee wellbeing and encourage the practice of self-care. Time off consists of both office-wide closures (holidays and quarterly breaks) and individually-administered leave. This balances the autonomy of individuals to take time off on their own initiative with certain days when all staff are encouraged to take time off.

Holidays

Joy as Resistance recognizes the following holidays:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - third Monday of January
- Presidents Day - third Monday of February
- Memorial Day - last Monday in May
- Juneteenth - June 19

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- Independence Day - July 4
- Labor Day - first Monday in September
- Indigenous Peoples' Day - second Monday in October

Full-time employees receive one paid day off (consisting of seven (7) hours) for each full day of holiday time. This is based on a 35 hour work week schedule. Holiday benefits for Part-Time employees will be prorated in accordance with the hours regularly worked by the employee. Temporary employees are ineligible for holiday leave benefits.

In those years when holidays fall on Saturday or Sunday, the Executive Director will designate the work day that will replace the weekend holiday (usually a Friday if the holiday falls on a Saturday, or Monday if the holiday falls on a Sunday). If business needs dictate that an employee must work on a designated holiday, the employee may take another paid day off within one month.

Compensated holidays when an employee is not performing work do not count as hours worked, and therefore do not count toward overtime calculations for non-exempt employees.

Office Closure

We choose to prioritize radical rest within our team when possible. As such, if business needs allow, the Joy as Resistance team may select quarterly periods of up to 2 weeks for office closure in addition to the recognized holidays. Exact dates for these office closure periods will be solidified by the Core Staff each year (typically in July or August) and will closely resemble and align with the Denver Public Schools calendar. Typically, this will look like one week in March for spring break, one week in November for fall break (inclusive of Thanksgiving), two weeks in mid-July, and two weeks in December/January (inclusive of Christmas and New Years Day).

During these office closures, full-time employees will continue to receive their normal pay. Part-time employees' pay will be prorated in accordance with the hours regularly worked by the employee. Temporary employees are ineligible for office closure pay but may choose to work their standard hours and receive their standard compensation.

Compensation during any such quarterly break when an employee is not performing work does not constitute hours worked, and does not count toward overtime calculations for non-exempt employees.

Responsive Paid Time Off

Within the Responsive Paid Time Off (PTO) leave policy, each Core Staff member has the opportunity and responsibility to take as much paid time off as they see fit, so long as they can fulfill their roles and responsibilities to the organization. Use of PTO may be tracked for business purposes. When possible we request that Joy Staff align their vacation or off periods to align with our office closures.

Since PTO is not accrued, but rather accessed upon request, there is no payout for PTO upon separation from employment.

Eligibility

All Core Staff with 90 days of continuous service are considered eligible under this policy. Staff with less than 90 days can request time to be considered on a case by case basis. Part-time staff, interns, and temporary employees are ineligible for PTO benefits. Interns will work the hours required of their specific program and will be expected to take the same holidays/breaks as staff.

Expectations

Under this policy, Core Staff are expected to:

- Use the Time Off Request Process to request PTO.
- Communicate with team members in advance when scheduling an absence in order to address any workload concerns or needs; OR notify the appropriate team member(s) before the start of the workday when an unscheduled absence occurs.
- Meet all established work plan goals despite the absences.
- Record the dates of absences on the Joy as Resistance staff calendar, regardless of whether planned or unplanned.
- Understand that due to staffing needs, not all leave requests can be honored.

Except for those on protected leave (such as state or federal family and medical leave), if a Core Staff member is unable to meet the expectations outlined above, Joy as Resistance reserves the right to temporarily revoke unlimited leave. Concerns about excessive or improper use of Paid Time Off policy can be considered during the Performance Accountability Process or brought up 1:1 or in a group setting using the Conflict Engagement Process.

Bereavement Leave

Joy as Resistance will provide reasonable paid time off for employees to attend funerals of friends and loved ones. In the event of a death in the immediate family of the employee, up to

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ten days paid time off may be granted to attend to family matters and funeral arrangements. Additional paid or unpaid time off may also be granted. Contact the Executive Director concerning your specific needs.

Jury Duty

Notify the Executive Director if you are summoned for jury duty. Time off from work will be granted as necessary in compliance with applicable law.

Military Leave

In accordance with requirements of law, Joy as Resistance will provide military leave of absence and reinstatement for qualifying employees.

Caretaking Leave

Beginning January 1, 2023, Joy as Resistance will participate in the Colorado Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. FAMLI will ensure all Colorado workers have access to paid leave in order to take care of themselves or their family during life circumstances that pull them away from their jobs — like growing their family or taking care of a loved one with a serious health condition. FAMLI will start providing benefits to employees beginning January 1, 2024.

Beginning January 1, 2023, Joy as Resistance and employees will contribute premiums for the program. Employees may start to see a premium contribution on their pay stubs.

Eligible employees will receive up to twelve weeks of leave. Those who experience pregnancy or childbirth complications will receive an additional four weeks.

VI. Internal Communication

Balancing Radical Transparency and Confidentiality

We commit to a high level of confidentiality as it relates to sharing organizational information with outside parties. To the degree possible, any information that an employee learns about Joy as Resistance, or its participants or donors, as a result of working for Joy as Resistance that is not otherwise publicly available constitutes confidential information. Staff members are encouraged to limit sharing confidential information with anyone who is not employed by or contracted with Joy as Resistance or to other persons employed by Joy as Resistance who do not need to know such information to assist in rendering services. Discussions involving

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sensitive information should always be held in confidential settings to safeguard the confidentiality of the information. This is particularly important as it relates to complying with HIPAA protections for our clinical client information.

Within the organization, we practice Radical Transparency as a key component of our self-management processes. This practice of transparent information sharing is practiced in balance with the commitments we hold for confidentiality.

VII. Acknowledgement of Receipt

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Joy as Resistance Employee Handbook and understand that it contains important information on Joy as Resistance general employee policies.

I acknowledge that I am expected to read, understand, and adhere to the Joy as Resistance policies and familiarize myself with the material in the Handbook.

I understand the policies contained in this Handbook are not intended to create any contractual rights or obligations, with the exception of the at-will policy, and that the Joy as Resistance may change, rescind or add to any policies, benefits or practices described in the Handbook, other than the employment-at-will policy, from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion, with or without prior notice. In addition, I specifically agree and understand that my employment is not for a specified term and is rather at the mutual consent of myself and Joy as Resistance. My employment is strictly at will, and either the Joy as Resistance or I may terminate employment at any time.

I have read and reviewed the Joy as Resistance employee handbook and agree to abide by all the policies.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____