In early May, Cohort 4 gathered for their second convening nestled in the beautiful mountains and forest outside Asheville, North Carolina. The theme for the convening was Liberation and Equity, a core element introduced into the Move to End Violence curriculum due to the urging and leadership of Cohort 2 and it has evolved over time. This work is led by Monica Dennis, Rachael Ibrahim, and Heidi Lopez, and we were joined by Eb. Brown and Spirit McIntyre of Trans*Visible to build on the previous work they done with MEV faculty and staff to further our understanding of gender justice.

Based on our learnings from previous convenings, we prioritized making the gathering space one of abundance, a space where liberation might feel possible, where women of color could be embraced and welcomed as their whole selves, where healing and restoration are at the center. This included providing a Spirit Space where people could pray, rest, meditate, and be in stillness anytime during the convening. Art reflection, where faculty Trina Greene Brown and Claudia Lopez experimented with an Instagra Wall to share updates about our lives and work in a fun way. Appreciations and affirmations, including designing personal Affirmation Bags. Healing resources, including sessions with Reiki practitioners, Lisbeth White and Spirit McIntyre.
Space where people could pray, rest, meditate, and be in stillness anytime during the convening.

Affirmation Station where we could deliver appreciations and affirmations to each other.
This kind of space was especially needed given that we dived into heavy content on heteropatriarchy and the pillars of white supremacy, internalized racial oppression, and reimagining gender. We reflected on the habits of internalized racial superiority and internalized racial inferiority and how they show up in ourselves and in our work.
The cohort began naming some of the big movement questions they are sitting with. How do we sustain and take tender care of ourselves as we work toward collective liberation? How might we account for the impact cis-sexism and transphobia have had on trans and gender non-conforming folks and our movement? What can Black-Native solidarity look like, create, and transform? How we honor motherhood in a context that honors and allows for the different experiences in our communities and bodies? And many more.

The intense week culminated in a cohort-led discussion and call for shared accountability on the cis-privilege in our community and leadership, the perpetuation of what felt like inauthentic connection among the group, and the lack of adequate resourcing of trans women of color.

This is work that requires us to bring our whole selves. To fully commit. To stay grounded. And it is hard.

We have so much gratitude for the hard truths, the risk-taking, and the vulnerability that everyone brought. For pushing past our comfort zones. And for the tenderness and care that we showed for ourselves and each other.

There is much for us to learn – and we are eager to learn together with all of you:
- How are you interrupting the deeply-ingrained habits of internalized racial superiority and inferiority that show up in ourselves and our work? What practices are you calling on to show up in liberated ways?
- How are you building beloved community across a multiplicity of identities, experiences, and priorities?