

FundWell

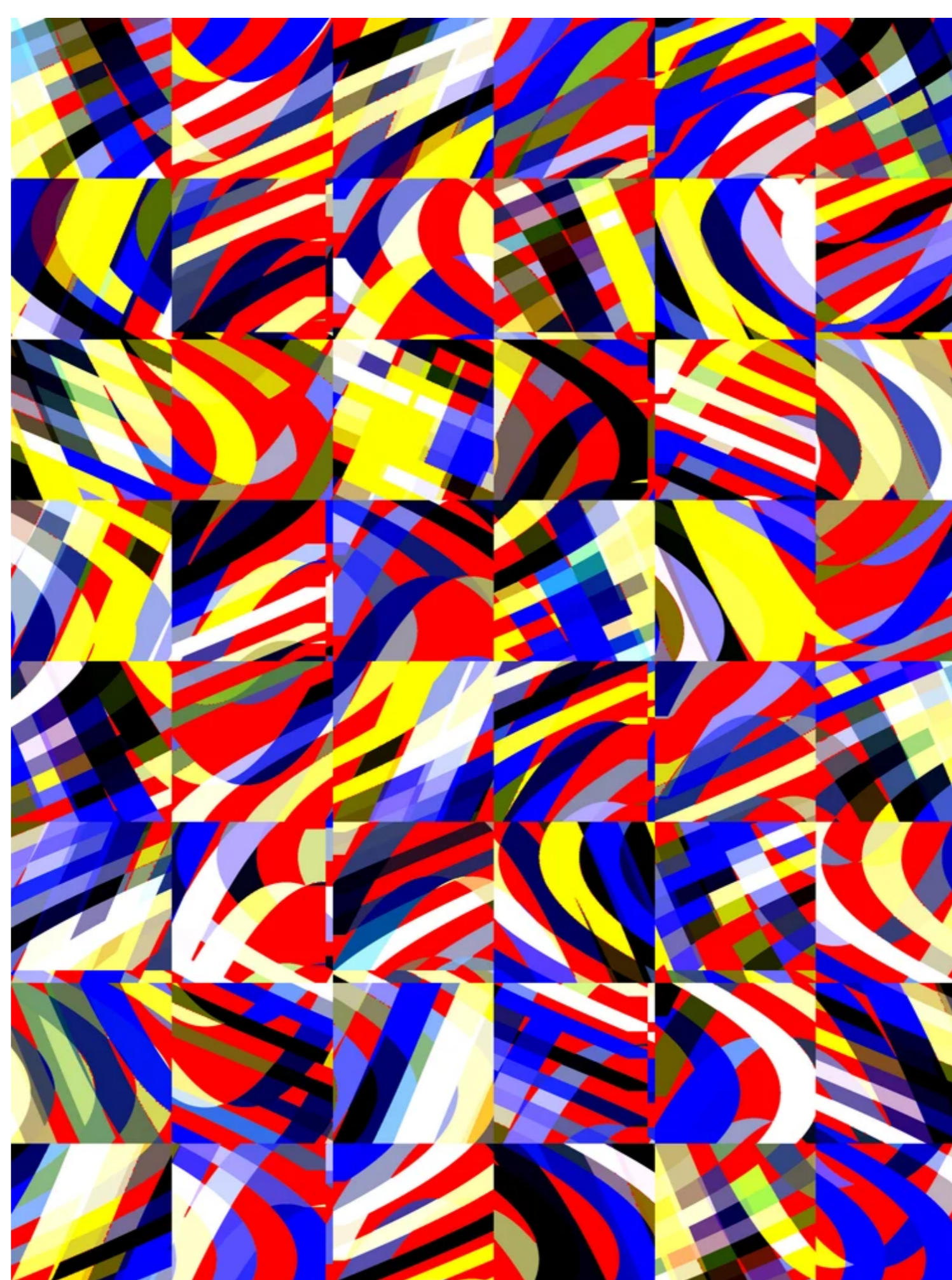
A Swift Summary of Wellbeing Stuff for Funders

Hello Changemakers,

In my 15-year journey within the social change sector, six were devoted to philanthropy at a grantmaking institution. Working on a gender equity portfolio for Mexico and Central America, I witnessed the profound trauma our grantee partners endured. In response, we initiated discussions around self and collective care, offering wellbeing grants, retreats, and peer-led dialogues on organizational wellbeing. Yet, despite our efforts, we danced around the topic of trauma and never acknowledged that we held it ourselves. Grantee partners only saw the trauma in the survivors of violence they supported, my colleagues and I only saw the trauma of survivors and our grantee partners.

However, a recent [article on Healing Systems](#) from Wellbeing Project partners [Collective Change Lab](#), prompted a profound revelation. I'm peeling back layers of denial, realizing how I had failed to grasp the interconnectedness of trauma within our ecosystem. Believing my position of power as a funder shielded me from trauma, I unwittingly perpetuated unhealthy behaviors towards our grantees rooted in fight, flight, or freeze responses. This manifested in fixating on grant application quality, prioritizing narratives of extreme suffering for funding, and feeling overwhelmed and often paralyzed, by the vastness of gender-based violence our partners sought to upend. Now that I'm no longer working in a grantmaking organization, but instead working alongside funders as they navigate these questions, I'm deeply curious about the growing role of trauma-informed approaches to philanthropy. Read on to see what I've surfaced.

Dana and The FWG team



Credit: Shutterstock

Image description: Multicolored collective abstract mosaic of squares on a grid that each contain a variety of polygons with various colors

FundWell Essentials

- [What is trauma-informed philanthropy?](#) Listen to this candid conversation between Jessamyn Shams-Lau from Camelback Ventures and Shruti Jayaraman from Chicago Beyond.
- Looking for some tips on how the [words you use can support healing](#)? Check out a quick guide from our friends at Recipes for Wellbeing.
- Check out The Wellbeing Project's [new hub](#) which houses diverse resources on intergenerational trauma and healing in the social change sector.

Talking Points: pick one and start a conversation!

- As a human working in philanthropy, can you honestly identify moments where you may have unintentionally perpetuated unhealthy behaviors or power dynamics?
- Using an example from the reflection above, how might you try to do things differently using a trauma-informed approach?
- In what ways might acknowledging and integrating trauma-informed approaches into philanthropy lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes in social change efforts?

Words on Wellbeing

“Every time trauma is healed, we restore a part of our past and make possible a brighter future for ourselves and succeeding generations. We transform separation, othering, and scarcity into relation, interdependence, and abundance.”

- **Thomas Hübl**

How does your funding organisation define wellbeing? Does it support wellbeing for its stakeholders? [Reflect and share here, in the Funders + Wellbeing Survey.](#)

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