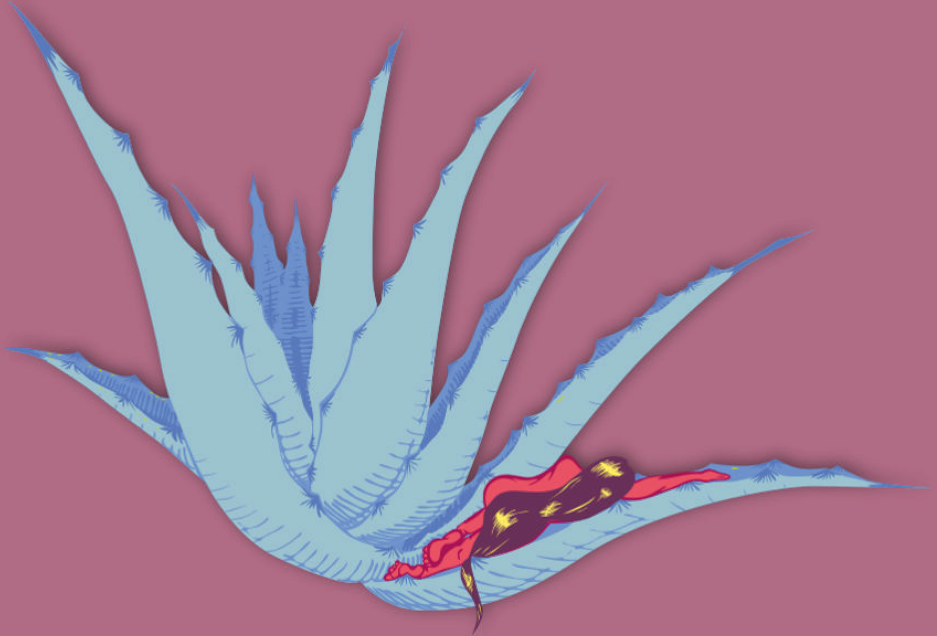




# CYBERWOMEN



**Self-care**

The loving touch

**INSTITUTE FOR  
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# The loving touch

- **Objective(s):** Conectarse las unas con las otras a través del tacto y contacto corporal para reflexionar sobre cómo damos y recibimos amor, cariño y afecto.
- **Length:** 20-30 minutes
- **Format:** Exercise
- **Skill level:** Basic
- **Required knowledge:**
  - None required
- **Related sessions/exercises:**
  - The rules of the game<sup>1</sup>
  - Building feminist self-care<sup>2</sup>
- **Needed materials:**
  - Mattresses or blankets
  - Cushions or pillows
  - Quiet, relaxing music
- **Recommendations:** Self-care is an essential part of a holistic digital security practice, and is important to consistently reinforce and encourage – it is highly recommended that you distribute exercises from this

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<sup>1</sup><https://cyber-women.com/en/trust-building-exercises/the-rules-of-the-game/>

<sup>2</sup><https://cyber-women.com/en/self-care/building-feminist-self-care/>

module throughout your training. for this and all sessions in your training, always be conscious of and sensitive to women's different physical abilities and limitations. both you and other participants must remain aware of and sensitive to those women who may not be comfortable with being touched by others (this is especially true of certain cultures over others) – for this reason, this exercise is best for groups of women who already know and trust one another. if some women prefer not to participate in the activity, let them know that this is completely acceptable. reassure them that they will not be made to feel uncomfortable, and that they can still participate by lying down and taking a few minutes to relax with slow, deep breaths.

This exercise was adapted from content in the IM Defenders Self-Care Manual

## **Leading the exercise**

1. Arrange the blankets, cushions and pillows in a circle on the floor - ask half of the group to lie down on their backs in the circle, with their heads towards the center as if forming the petals of a flower. Invite them to close their eyes and relax. Make sure there is at least one-person-width of space between each participant.
2. Ask the other half of participants get comfortable in the spaces between the other participants, each in a seated position next to the knees of those who are lying down.
3. You will lead this session using your voice. Explain to the seated group that they will give a "loving touch" to the women lying down next to them, touching and caressing them in a respectful way as you will soon describe. Those who are not comfortable touching others can place their hand on the head or shoulder of their partner, or simply close their eyes and listen to your voice.
4. In a calm, soothing tone of voice, you will give the seated women several instructions for their loving touches, with 2-3 minutes of spacing

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between each. Remind everybody that breath is very important for this exercise – they should all breathe slowly, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth:

- **First Instruction:** Caress the head of your partner.
- **Second Instruction:** Caress the forehead of your partner.
- **Third Instruction:** Caress the arms of your partner.
- **Fourth Instruction:** Caress the hands and fingers of your partner.

5. As the group progresses through the activity, talk about:
  - As women activists and human rights defenders, we typically have very little time for ourselves. Those who are caressing their partners are allowing them a rare opportunity to relax and feel taken care of.
  - The social burdens and responsibilities carried by women – as human rights defenders, mothers, sisters, we are always expected to take care of others, but do we take care of ourselves? Our lives often have very little space for self-care or collective care.
6. Once the women who are seated are done caressing the hands and fingers of their partner, give the women who are lying down a few moments to open their eyes and change positions with her partner. Repeat the process above, so that everyone who has given also has the chance to receive.