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Can yoga help chase the postelection blues?

What some people did this past week, from interfaith vigils to yoga classes to group mediation sessions, once the votes were counted.

By PENELOPE GREEN

They were a cheerful, if slightly dazed, group last Thursday evening at Voz, a store on Elizabeth Street that sells ethical fashion made by indigenous people — one man and seven women gathered around a garment rack and cinched to its uprights with lengths of wool. They wore back strap looms, which look sort of like belts, and they were being led in a postelection “weaving therapy” workshop by Cynthia Alberto, a master weaver and textile designer. Weaving, she explained, has long been used as occupational therapy. Its rhythms are meditative and soothing, and the tradition of a weaving circle foments community and creativity.

“It opens up a safe space to talk about our anxiety and what happened,” she said. And there was wine. Jeannette Figg, 29, and Rachel Tishler, 30, both corporate lawyers, had left work early to attend.

“It seemed like a fitting thing to do tonight,” Ms. Figg said. “The expectation yesterday at work was that we were just supposed to keep going, and it was hard because I was so traumatized.”

When what may have been the country’s most bitter presidential election — certainly it seemed like the longest — finally ended last week with a bang, it wasn’t just educational institutions that responded as if to a national trauma. While universities, high schools and elementary schools offered healing services, counseling and so-called safe spaces to their students, faith-based groups threw open their doors, too. So did yoga studios, arts organizations and meditation centers. As the week unfurled, even the New York City subway, typically not the most salubrious location, became a place of succor as Matthew Chavez, a 28-year-old artist, set up shop as the Subway Therapist.

There was free acupuncture on Nov. 9 at Olo Acupuncture, a community clinic on West 23rd Street. Yuka Hagiwara, Olo’s co-founder and clinical director, saw a steady stream of patients whom she treated mostly with a protocol, she said, that had been developed for soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorders.

“We ended up seeing about 20 people,” she said. “And we varied the treatment depending on what they were presenting with. Some were numb, some were panicky, some were just totally despondent and sobbing. It ran the gamut. We did this a few months ago after the bombing; it was a really lovely way to build community.” (Olo is on the same block in Chelsea where a bomb exploded in September, injuring 31 people.)

Before the election, Manpreet Katari, a clinical associate biology professor at N.Y.U., had organized a yoga and smoothie event for his students at Shaktibarre, a yoga studio in Brooklyn. But after hearing their postelection fears about President-elect Donald J. Trump, who had threatened or insulted immigrants, Muslims, Mexicans, African-Americans, women and the disabled, Professor Katari recast the Sunday afternoon class as a bolstering interlude. One student had a cousin who was worried about being deported; others in the L.G.B.T. community

felt betrayed by parents who said they supported them and also voted for Mr. Trump. Many worried about how to talk to family members and friends at home over Thanksgiving.

“People feel beaten up,” he said, “especially women and minorities. My daughter, who is in middle school, was very upset. I’ve been advocating the yoga class as an event to regain composure and gather strength. We need to continue this kind of group support.”

It wasn’t trauma that sent Joy Wyatt, 58, into Rutgers Presbyterian Church on West 73rd Street on the evening of Nov. 9, it was shock, she said. “And I was feeling angry because I couldn’t believe so many people would endorse principles that were so completely contrary to what I thought we had some sort of agreement on, an agreement about how we treat each other,” she said. Describing herself as an irregular church attendee, Ms. Wyatt said that nonetheless she “needed a quiet place to sit and think: ‘What am I going to do to wake up tomorrow and not feel this way? What action can I take?’”

The church had opened its doors for prayer and contemplation in the aftermath of the election, said the Rev. Andrew Stehlik, the church pastor, in response to his parishioners, many of whom he said were phoning him in tears. “We are sponsoring a Syrian family, and they were really frightened,” he said. “We wanted to offer a safe space to be together, partly to grieve but also to recommit to our values and look forward.”

That afternoon, the Auburn Seminary, a multifaith leadership organization, held an event in Washington Square Park called “Songs for the Soul.” The organizers had expected 60 people, but 300 or so showed up to sing “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” “We Shall Overcome” and other restorative hymns. Isaac Luria, 33, who is a faith activist, said, “We’d planned it a week before the election, because we knew people were going to be experiencing a lot of intense emotion because of the nature of the race.” He was stunned, however, by the event’s attendance, noting that his group was joined by the N.Y.U. community.

“This is hitting people in different ways depending on what race you are and what identity you hold,” he added. “As a Jewish person, I’m feeling particularly scared of the anti-Semitic supporters of Trump, but we have to stand up for the people they’re going to come for first, like the immigrant population. How do you create a healing space that allows us to move on but also to fight for our friends?”

On a lighter note, Facebook was flooded with puppy videos as an antidote to all the rancor. The Huffington Post posted clips of Bob Ross’s “The Joy of Painting,” the anesthetizing how-to-paint program, as a soothing balm. On “Wait Wait ... Don’t Tell Me!,” NPR’s weekly news quiz program, the writers substituted a quiz on rainbows and kittens for the show’s “Not My Job” segment. “We thought everybody could use a little adorable distraction,” said Peter Sagal, the host.

Distraction was on the mind of Andi Pettis, the director of horticulture at the High Line, who took to Twitter the day after the election to offer the park as a healing space. So did the directors of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in an email to its members. Over the weekend, Gathering Ground, a group connected with Prospect Park, led two-hour nature walks there as a “postelection nature connection for sanity and self-care.”

“If you need respite or solace or fortification, please come and walk or sit here,” Ms. Pettis tweeted last week. She said later: “It’s what I needed to do. To just be in nature, out on the western rail yards, a place in New York City that I love so much. It’s so important for people to have access to these healing resources, and I wanted to remind people that the High Line is there for them. We got some really warm feedback on social media.”

People did the best they could, with the resources they had. The Koneko Cat Cafe on the Lower East Side offered guided meditation ... with cats. The Radicle Herb Shop, a source for affordable herbal medicine and education in Brooklyn, said David Alper, an owner, handed out free Palo Santo sticks, which are like smudge sticks but made from trees that grow in the Andes. "It was something people could take home and metaphorically and literally light a fire and cleanse a path towards healing from the ground up," he said, adding that 50 people had already done so.

Lidewij Edelkoort, a trend forecaster who is also the dean of hybrid design studies at Parsons, opened her West Village townhouse for tea and conversation on Nov. 9. "We had appointments that day, and our clients were really shaken on all levels," she said. "So we felt it was appropriate to send out a message of love and compassion and to say, 'Come be with us.'" She offered tea and a roaring fire, and she said many took her up on the offer. "It was very cozy," she said. "We had nice tea. And my fantastic butcher ran out of roast chickens before 5 p.m."

That same afternoon, Mr. Chavez, who goes by the name Levee and has been performing as the Subway Therapist for the last six months, setting out two chairs and a card table and letting people unload, tried something different.

"I thought I'd make it more loose," he said. "I figured people had a lot of things to get off their chest."

So Mr. Chavez bought Post-its, pens and some tape, and parked himself in a subway tunnel between Seventh Avenue and Avenue of the Americas, inviting passers-by to share their thoughts. Within hours, the wall had become an enormous message board clocking the emotions of New Yorkers expressed in thousands of candy-colored squares. He sent a friend out to buy more Post-its. Another friend brought more. By the end of the night, there were 2,000 notes on the wall.

Kimberly Bernard, 35, a director of educational programming, wrote, "I wept for my country, I wept for my children."

"Don't Mourn, Organize," two yellow Post-its read.

"Trump Supporters Are Human, Too," a green one read.

A young woman in tears said to Mr. Chavez, "Thank you for doing this."

In the crowd that night was Cody Tarantini, 21, a student at Wagner College on Staten Island who works as a waitress. She wore a cardboard sign around her neck that read, "If you need a hug, just ask." Underneath was a strip of black tape that said, "Love Trumps Hate." At school that day, she had been wearing it over her mouth. "It made one of my professors cry," she said, adding: "I've hugged 17 people on the Staten Island Ferry and at school. I've gotten a lot more smiles. I think people are afraid to touch strangers."

Mr. Chavez surveyed the crush in the tunnel. "I have a passion for people," he said. "But this has turned into something more than I expected."

Mr. Chavez was still at it Monday evening. And there have been copycat Post-it operations in other parts of the subway, as well as in Seattle, San Francisco and Boston. Reporters from local and international television news programs have gone to the tunnel. That night, over 12,000 Post-its stretched from one end of the tunnel to the other, presenting a formidable task for Mr. Chavez. He has been carefully removing each note each night when he goes home in order, he said, to not impose upon the M.T.A. crews who might have to clean up after him, but also to refresh the message and keep it alive with new thoughts.

“Each day expresses a more hopeful and inclusive message,” he said the next morning, still groggy from a late night in the subway. “It’s been a stressful couple of days. But I think things are going to be O.K.”