

TASHMICA TOROK

Healing Justice Consultant

BURNING QUESTIONS

As a Black survivor of childhood rape and incest, Tashmica has spent much of her life asking, "What kinds of interventions could have prevented the harm and violence of sexual abuse that she endured as a child?"

Born stargazing to a white mother from the midwest and a Black father from the Bronx by way of the south, Tashmica was raised an Army brat in the border town of El Paso, Texas. Her hometown is situated next to Fort Bliss, a military base occupying stolen + unceded Muscalero Apache and Tigwe land. It was there – standing at the edge of vast differences – that Tashmica gained the uncanny ability to see the possibilities of the in-between spaces.

Tashmica was raised and schooled in community with evangelical Christians and missionaries in the Bible Belt. These would be the first people she would disclose her experiences of child sexual abuse to. They were also the first people to use bad theology to shape her relationship with healing, forgiveness, gender, and sexuality.

She spent her formative years singing in worship bands, serving those living in the 'colonias', and going to Christian camps causing her to spend much of her adult life journeying towards spiritual liberation by deconstructing harmful and oppressive theology while also healing from the impact of religious trauma.



WHO OWNS THE STARS?

When Tashmica was a little girl, her father bought her a telescope, a glow in the dark star map, and spent time taking her to the desert to stargaze where it was easy to trap and abuse her. A weaver of impactful stories, she launched TFF at an event called Stargazing where she invited her community to help her reclaim the stars. Together, they began building a nonprofit organization that worked to honor the bravery of children who had experienced sexual abuse by building a community invested in their whole being.

FOUNDER & VISIONARY

The Firecracker Foundation was based on ideas inspired by her own experiences and a desire to provide her community with a healing-centered response to child sexual abuse (CSA). As the organization's lead conjurer of resources, she uses her gifts to incite riots of generosity that have resulted in more than a million dollars in financial investments and countless hours of volunteer service. The foundation is now a vibrant organization that serves as a model of what is achievable through community-based, grassroots organizing that is survivor-led, trauma-informed and focused on healing as the main priority for youth and their families.

This would not be the last time that Tashmica would alchemize painful memories into healing rituals for herself and others. She is recognized as a trusted and creative healer guided by the emerging needs and collective wisdom of those wounded by the harms of violence, oppression, and white supremacy.

In 2015, Tashmica was honored to become a member of the inaugural cohort of Just Beginnings Collaborative where she was introduced to a beautifully diverse community of survivors from across the nation. It was there that her questions eventually propelled her toward the values of transformative justice and abolition. She is an inquisitive collector of knowledge and considers books her comfort items.





ABOLITIONIST

As an abolitionist, Tashmica is cultivating her community's ability to imagine, build, and maintain ways to intervene on acts of violence without relying on police, prisons or other state institutions as a path toward ending state-sanctioned violence against the Black and brown people we serve. These efforts include projects like the Transformative Justice Parenting Network and the Reimagining Transformative Community Services Project that convenes mainstream, white-led organizational leaders and advocates within the domestic violence (DV)/sexual violence (SV) institutional movement to explore and disrupt their relationship and complicity with the state.

She wholeheartedly believes that relieving the threat of violence from the carceral state and community-based responses to violence will create pathways for those causing harm to seek help, practice accountability, and end generational cycles of violence.

While Tashmica has served on several local, state, and national committees and board working within interdisciplinary teams, in this season of her life, she is excited to focus her work on the local level. A relentless truth teller, she is often involved in cross-movement acts of resistance because as Fannie Lou Hamer taught us,

'NOBODY'S FREE UNTIL EVERYBODY IS FREE.'

Tashmica is joyfully disruptive. She leads with levity, laughter, and a mother wit that allows her to deliver challenging concepts and practices with humor and ease. She adds a level of mischief and playfulness to every room she encounters. When Tashmica is not visioning, cultivating, and facilitating her own heart work, she is raising the free people in her home, playing in her garden, helping leaders build their own dreams, and teaching and modeling how to create safe(r) spaces for all.

Visit www.tashmicatorok.com for more information or follow her on Tiktok @Tashmica_ for an inside look at what she's growing - in her garden and in her work. To learn more about The Firecracker Foundation, visit www.thefirecrackerfoundation.org.