



# **The** **soft girl era** **Guidebook**

## **“Steps to Step Into Your Soft Girl Era”**

**...for Black Women, by Black Women, with Love and Community**

**Designed to accompany the  
“Soft Girl Era - Reclaiming Rest, Redefining Strength: The Truth About the Soft Girl Era”  
Mental Health Panel Discussion presented by  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. - Eta Upsilon Zeta Chapter in Fort Wayne, IN on April 25, 2025**

**Created by: Stephanie Burton, MEd, LMHC**

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***The “Soft Girl Era” is YOURS to define. It is not about fitting someone else’s aesthetic. It’s about reclaiming ease, tenderness, healing, and JOY — even in a world that tries to deny us these things. It’s also about making sure we don’t leave our sisters behind. Stepping into our Soft Girl Era requires that we create spaces for us to feel safe, seen and supported as a collective. This guidebook is designed with you in mind. Cheers to stepping into your Soft Girl Era, sis!***

## **Step 1: Make It Your Own — What Does Softness Mean to You?**

Take a moment to reflect:

- When I hear “soft life,” I feel...
- The emotions or practices I want more of in my life are...
- The parts of myself I want to nourish are...
- I know I’m in my Soft Era when I...

**Write your thoughts below, on a separate sheet of paper, or in your journal:**

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### Step 2: Building Your Soft Life (Personally).

Here are some ways to create softness for yourself. Choose what feels right for you:

1. Protect your peace: Say no without explaining yourself.
2. Prioritize rest: Nap, sleep, daydream without guilt.
3. Curate joy: Make space for things that feel good just because.
4. Move your body lovingly: Stretch, dance, walk, breathe.
5. Create beauty: In your space, your clothing, your spirit.
6. Nourish yourself: Food, water, skin care, self-affirmations.
7. Therapy + emotional check-ins: Normalize tending to your mind.
8. Set boundaries: Let people know where you end and they begin.

**Pick 1–3 actions you’ll start this month. Can you think of any other ways to create your soft life? Be as creative and true to yourself as your soul and imagination will allow you!**

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### Step 3: Softness in Sisterhood — Community Care

Softness isn't selfish — it's contagious. Here's how we can bring each other along:

1. Check in on your sister friends: Ask “How's your heart?” not just “How are you?”
2. Share resources: Therapy directories, wellness grants, self-care events.
3. Create accessible moments of joy: Potlucks, movie nights, healing circles.
4. Support Black women-owned businesses: Especially wellness brands, bookstores, artists.
5. Mentor and uplift: Pass along what you learn, no gatekeeping.
6. Advocate: Fight for equitable access — healing is a right, not a luxury.

**Who is one sister you can uplift this week? How will you do it?**



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### Step 4: Book Recommendations — Wisdom from Our Own

Here are some books by Black women — especially therapists and wellness experts — to ground and inspire you:

“Sister Outsider” by Audre Lorde

“All About Love” by bell hooks

“Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto” by Tricia Hersey (founder of The Nap Ministry)

“Sisterhood Heals: The Transformative Power of Healing in Community”  
by Dr. Joy Harden Bradford

“The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health” by Dr. Rheeda Walker

“Set Boundaries, Find Peace” by Nedra Glover Tawwab

“Matters of the Heart” by Dr. Thema Bryant

“The Garden Within” by Dr. Anita Phillips

“What Happened to You?” by Dr. Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey

“Self-Care for Black Women” by Oludara Adeeyo

“Healing Rage” by Ruth King

“The Body Is Not An Apology” by Sonya Renee Taylor

“The Light We Carry” by Michelle Obama

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## Step 4: Therapy Resources

Here is a list of Black women licensed and pre-licensed mental health therapists in Fort Wayne, IN, as well as some national directories, if you'd like to go even deeper into creating your soft life, by utilizing the power of therapy... for us, by us!

*\*Please note, this is not an exhaustive list. There may be some Black women therapists in the city that we have not captured here. We did our best to do our due diligence to compile as complete of a list as we could.*

Bernadine Payton, LMHC  
Crystal Kelly, LMHC  
Dayla Robinson, LCSW  
Darla Nave, LMFT  
Dawn Smith, LMHCA  
Doreen Huddleston, MSW  
Erica Woodward, LCSW  
Fatima Washington, Master's Level Intern  
Frederica Rogers, LCSW  
Ifeoma Turner, MSW  
Janell Lane, LMHC  
Jacqueline Vedder, LMFT  
Kyla Neely, LCSW  
Dr. Lakeya Stewart, LMHCA  
LaToya Griffin, LMFTA  
Maegan Hayes, MSW  
Marie Love, LMHCA  
Melanie King, LMSW  
Michelle Rowland, Pre-Licensed Counselor  
Migonette Daniels, LMSW  
Ogechi Uju-Eke, LMHCA  
Olinka Clark, LCSW  
Rachel Busche, MSW  
Raven Morton, LMHCA  
Robin Crawford, LMHC  
Sashelle Rose, LMHCA  
Shameka Royal, LMHCA  
Shannon Walters-Harvey, LMHC  
Stephanie Burton, LMHC  
Tamia Parker, Master's Level Intern  
Tawanna Scruggs-Cottrell, Pre-Licensed Counselor  
Tonisha King, LMHCA  
Wanda Faye Demeke, LMHCA

Psychology Today Directory: [www.psychologytoday.com/indiana/therapists](http://www.psychologytoday.com/indiana/therapists)

Therapy for Black Girls Directory: [www.therapyforblackgirls.com](http://www.therapyforblackgirls.com)

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