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What A Direct Action Campaign Can Do:

- Point a Spotlight: Raise public awareness about an institution, program or injustice. Bring hidden wrongs to light. Example: Campaigns against WTO, IMF/World Bank; genetically engineered foods.
- Delegitimize Organizations, Institutions and Programs: Withdraw consent from the functioning of unjust bodies, laws, programs. Interfere with their operations. Raise their social costs. Examples: U.S. Civil Rights Movement, antinuclear activism, etc.

- **Build a Movement:** Provide opportunities for people to engage in action, experience solidarity and support, take greater risks, deepen commitment. Examples: almost any powerful action.
- **Educate and Inform:** Both those in the movement and those who hear of actions: Almost every good action.
- **Strengthen Voices of Reform:** It may not be our intention or goal, but when thousands of people are out in the streets, institutions are more likely to listen to 'respectable' critics within. Examples: calls for more 'transparency' within WTO and World Bank; de facto legalization of needle exchange in SF.

The Two Main Ways Direct Action Works:

- **Interfering with the operations of injustice:** examples: WTO blockade, burning draft cards, stopping troop trains, pulling up genetically modified crops
- **Embodying an alternative:** Address a problem legally or illegally: Examples: Squats, Needle Exchange programs, feeding the homeless.

Nonviolence in Direct Action Campaigns Is About:

- **Vision:** We embody the world we want to create, we use means consistent with our ends. We engage in imaginative action. We expect to win.
- **Choices:** We do not let structures of force limit our choices. We expand the choices of our opponents.
- **Patterns:** We understand the patterns of violence and control so we can make choices about our responses. We learn how to de-escalate tension and potential conflict in order to expand our range of choices in any situation.
- **Communication:** We communicate with each other, with our potential allies and with our opposition, and develop our communication skills.
- **Energy:** We look at situations energetically and learn skills for shifting and directing energy.
- **Inclusiveness:** We focus on expanding our movement and increasing opportunities for people of diverse needs and awareness to take part. We resolve our internal conflicts through discussion and negotiation.
- **Respect for diversity:** We respect our own differences, needs, cultures, life circumstances, politics and views as well as differences of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, physical challenges, etc.

Empowered Direct Action

Empowerment: Empowered direct action aims to transform the structures of domination and control, and to radically change the way power is conceived of and operates. Empowerment is our ability to create, to make choices, to have a voice in decisions that affect us. When we act together in an empowered way, we develop collective power. Through personal and collective empowerment, we can fight against, dismantle and transform the systems of domination that perpetuate oppression.

Interconnectedness: Empowered direct action sees that all of life is interconnected, and that empowerment arises from our connections to the web of life. Every act we take affects the whole. All systems of oppression are also interconnected. We might choose to focus on one issue at a given time, but we must ultimately dismantle the whole system of domination.

Radical Imagination: Empowered direct action envisions and prefigures the world we want to create. We use means consistent with our ends. We expect to win, and our strategies, tactics, and organizations are designed to be the foundation of our new social structure. We value creativity, bringing art, music, dance, drums, magic, ritual, masks, puppets, drama and song into action. We refuse to be boring, tedious, dreary or doctrinaire.

Solidarity: We know that the structures of domination cannot be undermined without risk. Through solidarity, we share the price of our resistance and attempt to mediate the violence of the systems of oppression. While we may incur suffering as a result of our actions, we don't embrace suffering for its own sake. Our goal is to alleviate suffering, and our solidarity extends to all who suffer under political and economic repression.

Choice: Empowered direct action understands that every situation offers choices to be made. We do not let structures of force limit our choices, nor do we let fear control us. We learn to stay centered in the midst of chaos, and retain our ability to make conscious choices in any situation. We pose new choices and craft dilemmas for our opponents. We learn how to de-escalate tension and potential conflict in order to expand our options in any situation. We fight against institutions, structures, and acts of domination, but we hold open the possibility that the individuals caught in those systems can change. We craft our strategies and tactics to make change easier for our opponents.

Inclusiveness and diversity: Empowered direct action values diversity, and seeks to expand our movement and increase opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds, needs and life situations to take part. We respect our own differences, needs, cultures, life circumstances, politics and views as well as differences of gender, race, class sexual orientation, age, physical challenges, and others. The patterns of oppression also exist within us and within our movement, and we are willing to transform ourselves as well as the structures we oppose.

Direct democracy and horizontal organizing: Empowered direct action creates ways of organizing and acting that allow all people involved to have a voice in decisions that affect them. We create the minimum structures necessary for our actions and organizations. Decisions are made from the bottom up, not from the top down. We encourage everyone to take leadership in the sense of stepping forth and proposing directions for the group: but we allow no one to direct or control the group.

Dialogue: Empowered people will not all think alike. Our movement contains great diversity of ideas, visions, strategies, and principles. We honor these tensions, and engage in ongoing discussion and dialogue to further our collective growth. We recognize that decisions made without adequate discussion will not hold.

Freedom and Passion: Empowered direct action values passion, emotion, freedom, spontaneity, and surprise. We honor rage as a sane response to oppression and a potential creative power. We are willing to love deeply and fearlessly, and we fight not just against what we hate, but for what we love.

Making Nonviolence Work: Starhawk

An ecological understanding of violence sees it as a pattern of relationships that underlies all systems of domination and control. Such systems are characterized by:

- the concentration of resources and the fruits of labor to benefit the few.
- top-down decision making. Bosses who give orders and issue directives that others must obey.

Violence underlies these systems. Violence is :

- the capacity to inflict physical pain, harm or death.
- the capacity to punish by restricting freedom and limiting choices.
- the capacity to withhold vital resources or rewards.
- the capacity to inflict emotional and psychological damage and to shame and humiliate.

Systems of domination, no matter how powerful they seem, are unstable. They are inherently unsustainable, because to be sustainable any system or organism must be based on balanced, cycling flows of energy and resources.

The system maintains itself by:

The actual use of force and violence. The use of force, however, is costly. No system of domination can afford to use force to control every aspect of its functioning.

The willingness of enforcers to inflict violence. No gun shoots itself: a human hand pulls the trigger, a human mind makes the choice to do so.

Fear: the system is maintained not because it actually uses force, but because we fear its capacity to do so.

Hope: we accept the system and comply with its demands not because we necessarily benefit from it, but because we hope to do so. We might win the lottery, or become the CEO of a dotcom, or the star of a sitcom. Such hopes keep us embedded in the system.

Limiting imagination: making us believe we have no choice but to comply. Restricting our thinking to their categories.

A strategy of nonviolent direct action seeks to destabilize the systems of control by undermining the mechanisms that maintain it:

Radical imagination: refusing to accept the dominators' picture of the world. Thinking outside the lines. Daring to dream what has never been before, to think the unthinkable, and then to create it.

Hope: replacing the false hope the system offers with a vision of a free, just and abundant world. Embodying that vision in how we organize, how we treat each other, in the symbols we choose and the actions we take. Marshalling the skills, tools and resources to make that vision real, and making it so desirable, so inspiring, so sexy, that the pale hopes the system offers cannot compare.

When people become hopeless about improving their condition, they are no longer invested in the status quo and can be moved to take action against it. When the system goes too far, it sows the seeds of its own collapse.

Courage: The more we can move beyond fear, the less control the system has over us. Courage can be found through individual faith: not necessarily in a God or religious tradition, but faith in human capacities for change or in nature's infinite creativity. As well, there are many psychological techniques and personal disciplines that can help us learn to manage fear.

Conscious choice and responsibility: Knowing that we do have choices in any situation. Being willing to accept the consequences of those choices.

Solidarity: When we support each other in actions and tense situations, when we act together to protect the most vulnerable among us, when we can face the potential violence of the system in community instead of alone, we undermine fear.

Raising the costs: When we cease complying out of fear, we force the system to actually enforce its decrees. This is costly in terms of money, materials, and the undermining of public support. We force the system to reveal the underlying violence that supports it.

Undermining compliance: the police, the army, the prison guards are not generally of the class that actually benefits from the current economic and political system. When their willingness to serve as enforcers is undermined, the system falls.

To do this, and survive, we need to restrain the potential violence of the system, which has the potential to simply eliminate anyone who opposes it. The absolute violence of the system is restrained by a subtle web of forces both individual and social. The more we understand how those forces function to tighten or loosen that web, the more room to maneuver we can secure for our actions. Nonviolence as a tactic is sometimes criticized for being self-sacrificial, for relinquishing the right to self defense against the

state. But all forms of political struggle require some sacrifice. Strategic nonviolence, correctly understood, can be our most powerful form of self defense..

Violence is unleashed by:

Dehumanization: seeing the opponent as a category rather than a full human being. This is how racism, sexism, homophobia, classism etc. maintain systems of domination. People of color, punks, anarchists in dreadlocks, visibly poor people, all who fit a stereotype of prejudice are at greater physical and legal risk in an action.

Perception of threat: When we feel we are being attacked, we are more likely to strike first. A global strategy to counter our movement has been to portray us as threatening terrorists, and the police as 'saviors' of the people.

Drugs or alcohol that loosen inhibitions.

Lack of witnesses.

Lack of potential repercussions.

Approval by the authorities.

Approval of figures of respect: teachers, church leaders, etc.

Group pressure: Men who alone would never molest a woman can be pressured into joining a gang rape. Once a group consciousness sees brutality or atrocity as acceptable, it becomes easier for individuals to participate and harder to resist.

Perception of legitimacy by the public.

Violence is restrained by:

Human empathy and reluctance to kill or harm. (And yes, this applies even to the police, although obviously not universally. But many studies have shown that even in wartime, the average soldier must be specifically trained to overcome inhibitions against killing.)

Fear of repercussions, personal, political and legal.

Visibility and the presence of witnesses and/or media. We often see the police using restraint on the street during the action, and then brutalizing and intimidating prisoners in jail.

Public opinion and fear of censure.

Law, and the structures of accountability that are built into the system.

A campaign of nonviolent direct action begins its self defense long before hitting the streets, by seeking to tighten that web of restraint, through any or all of the following:

Outreach and education so that the public understands the goals and tactics of our action, and to counter dehumanization.

Making alliances and building coalitions with groups that can increase public pressure and potential political repercussions for the authorities.

Holding public officials accountable for past acts of violence.

Planning for group solidarity and strategizing how to protect those at greatest risk.

Passing laws that restrain the violence of the authorities; opposing laws that unleash it.

In the moment of confrontation, nonviolent self defense means we:

Know what our intention is for the action: literally stopping a meeting? Building

alliances? Drawing attention to an issue? The specific choices we make will depend on our intention.

Convey that intention clearly to the group as best we can, so that everyone understands the reasons behind the choices we may make.

Oppose the power of violence with the power of our radical imagination.

Remember that every act we take is a choice, and that we have choices in any situation.

Seek to undermine dehumanization, by not ourselves dehumanizing our opponents, for when we do we simply reinforce the mindset and energetic patterns that encourage violence.

Remain human ourselves, staying calm, centered, and not giving way to fear.

Act in unexpected ways, not doing the dance of violence and intimidation, but writing our own steps and music.

Bring art, music, drums, seeds, masks, puppets and magic into confrontation to embody our vision and hope.

Seek to broaden the awareness of our opponents that they are also making choices, that their behavior is not predetermined.

Use humor and surprise.

Know what may escalate the tension in a situation, and what may de-escalate it, and make a conscious choice about which to do.

Act to strengthen our group solidarity and support.

Ask these questions before we take any extreme act:

Does this further our intention?

What base of support do we have for taking this action? What support do we risk losing? Why is this act worth risking that support?

Did we agree to this act? If not, what will it do to our community solidarity?

Will this act loosen the web of restraint? Can we afford to do so at this moment?

Who is most at risk, if we do, and have they agreed to accept that risk?

Does this act embody our hope and vision?

Do I know and trust the person urging me to take this action?

Does this action embody the world we're fighting for?

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ANTI-OPPRESSION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES In order to build a world free from domination, we will use the following principles and practices in our lives and in our work.

PRINCIPLES

1. Power and privilege can play out in our group dynamics in destructive ways. We must challenge supremacist practices which marginalize, exclude or de-humanize others. Privilege, like power can be used for positive purposes but should be used with awareness and care.

2. We can only identify how power and privilege play out when we are conscious and committed to understanding how white supremacy, patriarchy, classism, heterosexism and all other systems of oppression affect each one of us. Each person who enjoys privileges granted by systems of prejudicial power (no matter how radical or revolutionary) must recognize the benefits and costs of

their privileges. We must take responsibility for our prejudices and actions which perpetuate oppression.

3. Until we are clearly committed to anti-oppression practice, all forms of oppression will continue to divide our movements and weaken our power.

4. Developing anti-oppression practices is life-long work and requires a life-long commitment. No single workshop is sufficient for learning to change one's behaviors. We are all vulnerable to being oppressive and we need to continuously struggle with these issues and behaviors.

5. Dialogue and discussion are necessary and we need to learn how to listen non-defensively and communicate respectfully if we are going to have effective anti-oppression practice.

PRACTICES

Personal Practices

- Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia head on.
- When you witness or experience an abuse of power or oppression interrupt the behavior and address it on the spot or later, either one on one, or with a few allies; this is about ways to address oppressive behavior that will encourage change.
- Challenge the behavior not the person. Be sensitive and promote open dialogue.
- Don't generalize feelings, thoughts, behaviors, etc to a whole group.
- Recognize the when someone offers criticism around oppressive behavior, to treat it as a gift that it is rather than challenging the person or invalidating their experience. Give people the benefit of the doubt and don't make assumptions.
- Be willing to lose a friend but try not to "throw away" people who fuck up because you don't want to be associated with them. Help them admit what they did and help them take responsibility for making reparations for their behavior.
- Challenge "macho bravado" and "rugged individualism" in yourself, your friends and in activism.
- Take on the "grunt" work of cooking, cleaning, set up, clean up, phone calls, e-mail, taking notes, doing support work, sending mailings. Take active responsibility for initiating, volunteering for and following through with this work.
- Understand that you will feel discomfort and pain as you face your part in oppression, and realize that this is a necessary part of the process of liberation and growth. We must support each other and be gentle with each other in this process.
- Don't feel guilty, feel responsible. Being part of the problem doesn't mean you can't be an active part of the solution.
- Maintain these practices and contribute equal time and energy to building healthy relationships, both personal and political.

Organizational Practices

- Commit time for organizational discussions on discrimination and oppression

- Commit time to learn about each other, to share stories about our lives, our history, our culture, our experiences
- Set anti-oppression goals and continually evaluate whether or not you are meeting them
- Promote an anti-racist, anti-heterosexist, anti-transphobic, anti-ableist message and analysis in everything we do, in and outside of activist space
- Remember these are complex issues and they need adequate time and space
- Create opportunities for people to develop skills to communicate about oppression.
- Promote egalitarian group development by prioritizing skill shares and being aware of who tends to do what work, who gets recognized/supported/solicited.
- Respect different styles of leadership and communication
- Don't push historically marginalized people to do things because of their oppressed group (tokenism); base it on their work, experience, and skills
- Make a collective commitment to hold people accountable for their behavior so that the organization can be a safe and nurturing place for all.

Meeting Practices

- It is the role of the facilitator to ensure that the space safe and welcoming for everyone and the responsibility of each groups member to contribute to this.
- Become a good listener
- Don't interrupt people who are speaking
- Be conscious of how your use of language may perpetuate racism, sexism, homophobia or ageism
- Try not to call people out because they are not speaking
- Be conscious of how much space you take up or how much you speak in a group Practice "stepping up, stepping back" so we can each contribute to equal participation.
- Be careful of not hogging the show, speaking on every subject, speaking in capital letters, restating what others say or speaking for others
- Respect different views and opinions
- Balance race, gender and age participation
- People who haven't yet spoken get priority
- It is the group's responsibility to challenge racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic remarks.

Guidelines for use of the space and for meetings: We have also established the following guidelines for the use of the space and for meetings, which will cover anyone using the space for training, meetings, performances, making art or any other purpose:

Use of the Space

1. This space / meeting is open to all people who abide by our principles and practices
2. This space / meeting is not open to law enforcement officers
3. This space / meeting is not open to the media without the consent of all participants.
4. No violence or threats of violence (verbal or physical) will be tolerated. Violence includes racist, sexist, homophobic, and any oppressive remarks/behaviors.
5. Respect for the health and well-being of everyone in the space, and the space itself. No actions or substances are allowed that would jeopardize this climate.
6. Everyone is responsible to take part in maintaining the space. Leave your workspace / meeting space cleaner than you found it.
7. This space, and all activities in it, are non-sectarian and non-authoritarian.

This document is compiled by Lisa Fithian from the “Anti-Racism Principles and Practices” by RiseUp DAN-LA, Overcoming Masculine Oppression by Bill Moyers and the FEMMAFESTO by a women’s affinity group in Philadelphia

Tools for White Guys who are Working for Social Change and Other People Socialized in a Society Based on Domination

1. Practice noticing who's in the room at meetings - how many men, how many women, how many white people, how many people of color, is it majority heterosexual, are there out queers, what are people's class backgrounds. Don't assume to know people, but also work at being more aware.
- 2a. Count how many times you speak and keep track of how long you speak.
- 2b. Count how many times other people speak and keep track of how long they speak.
3. Be conscious of how often you are actively listening to what other people are saying as opposed to just waiting your turn and/or thinking about what you'll say next.
4. Practice going to meetings focused on listening and learning; go to some meetings and do not speak at all.
- 5a. Count how many times you put ideas out to the group.
- 5b. Count how many times you support other people's ideas for the group.
6. Practice supporting people by asking them to expand on ideas and get more in-depth, before you decide to support the idea or not.
- 7a. Think about whose work and contribution to the group gets recognized.
- 7b. Practice recognizing more people for the work they do and try to do it more often.
8. Practice asking more people what they think about meetings, ideas, actions, strategy and vision. White guys tend to talk amongst themselves and develop strong bonds that

manifest in organizing. This creates an internal organizing culture that is alienating for most people. Developing respect and solidarity across race, class, gender and sexuality is complex and difficult, but absolutely critical and liberating.

9. Be aware of how often you ask people to do something as opposed to asking other people "what needs to be done".

10. Think about and struggle with the saying, "you will be needed in the movement when you realize that you are not needed in the movement".

11. Struggle with and work with the model of group leadership that says that the responsibility of leaders is to help develop more leaders, and think about what this means to you.

12. Remember that social change is a process, and that our individual transformation and individual liberation is intimately interconnected with social transformation and social liberation. Life is profoundly complex and there are many contradictions. Remember that the path we travel is guided by love, dignity and respect - even when it is bumpy and difficult to navigate.

13. This list is not limited to white guys, nor is it intended to reduce all white guys into one category. This list is intended to disrupt patterns of domination which hurt our movement and hurt each other. White guys have a lot of work to do, but it is the kind of work that makes life worth living.

14. Day-to-day patterns of domination are the glue that maintain systems of domination. The struggle against capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism and the state, is also the struggle towards collective liberation.

15. No one is free until all of us are free.

Solidarity in Practice,

drafted in September 2001 in Washington DC
9/23/03

Revised

We are very different groups. We are not necessarily immediate allies nor are we each other's greatest enemy. There are many things on which we do not agree. But, we will be in the streets together during the FTAA protests in Miami. We know that the police and media are trying to divide us in order to crush our movements. Solidarity is the way in which our diversity becomes our strength, we build our movements and we protect each others' bodies, lives and rights.

We believe we have some things in common. We believe in basic human rights and the need to live with respect and dignity. We believe we must protect this planet – our air, water, earth and food or we will all die. We believe these global corporate and political institutions are serving only the interests of the rich. We all agree it's time for fundamental and radical change.

As we take to the streets together, let us work to be in solidarity with one another. The following suggestions offer ways in which we can make our solidarity real.

Personal

- Challenge and critique other groups and individuals in constructive ways and in a spirit of respect
- Listen without getting defensive. Be open in thinking, not rigid in positions
- Don't make assumptions no matter what a person looks like or what groups they belong to
- Don't assume tactics are the only way to measure militancy or radicalness
- Refrain from personal attacks, even with people whom strongly disagree. (Focus on how you feel, not what they did.)
- Understand that even though we may disagree we have come to our politics, strategies and choice of tactics through thoughtful and intelligent consideration of issues, circumstances and experiences.

Street

- Do not intentionally put people at risk who have not chosen it
- Do not turn people over to the police
- Do not let people within our own groups interfere with other groups
- Respect the work of all medics, legal observers, independent media people
- Share food, water, medical and other supplies
- Support everyone who is hurt, gassed, shot or beaten.
- Respect other groups' rights to do a certain type of protest at certain times and places. If you choose to participate, do so within the tone and tactics they set. If you do not agree, do not participate in that protest or bring another protest into that time and space.
- Understand that our actions and tactics have repercussions that go beyond ourselves and our immediate groups. And that some tactics overrun the space of others.
- If you choose to negotiate with the police, never do so for other groups to which you are not a part.

Media

- Do not denounce other demonstrators.
- Talk about your strategy, not others.
- Acknowledge other groups' existence and role they play in creating change
- Acknowledge that we sometimes disagree about strategy and tactics.

- Avoid using the word violence
- Condemn police repression and brutality
- Share media contacts and do not monopolize the media's attention

Jail Solidarity: No one is free until everybody is free.

Staying Safe & Sensible in Action

A demonstration where police might attack requires a higher level of tactical awareness than your run-of-the-mill march. Here are some generally applicable suggestions to help you stay safe and effective in the streets

Be aware of what is going on, what you want to happen, and how crowd and police dynamics are evolving, or could rapidly change.

Always have a safe space in mind. All demonstrators need to be aware of a safe place to get to if a situation grows out of hand. You define "safe" and "unsafe" for yourself. It could be behind some trees, in a park, a parking lot, a door-way, alleyway, a restaurant, several blocks from the action, etc. For some, safe is among the locked arms of fellow activists, right on the front lines. Safe spaces change depending on movement and barriers by other demonstrators and the police, etc. There's no hard and fast rule about finding a safe space, but always have one in mind before the shit hits the fan.

Similarly, you should always have an exit in mind. Assess how to leave a bad situation. Maybe it is best to be in a large group for protection. But if the police are herding you like cattle, then the large crowd is their focus and you may need to break up and leave in small groups. You should always be ready to quickly change clothing to avoid being recognized in case of pursuit. Getting away one moment might be your only chance to be active the next. Arrange with your buddies how to leave, and how to re-connect if you get separated during an exit.

Use the buddy system and move in a group. If at all possible, make sure to have a partner you can trust, to whom you will always stay close. That way, at least one person always knows your whereabouts and condition. Working in small groups of people, all of whom you know well and trust with your own safety, is another important factor. Even if you are not part of an organized affinity group with a plan of action, it is helpful to at least be with folks you can rely on. Arrange with your buddies how to re-connect if you get separated in a large demo. An easy technique is to agree to go back to the same spot you last saw each other.

Be aware of crowd dynamics and dangers. You need to know what is going on - not just in view, but around the corners and a few blocks away. Pay attention to the mood of the crowd and the police. Certain actions like property destruction and violence will likely be

caused by or result in violent behavior on the part of police. Be aware of police movement and different groups of protestors entering or leaving an area. Try to monitor the vibes and focuses of friends and foes at all times.

Know what is going on out of view, by regularly sending out scouts to investigate what the police and other demonstrators are up to. Since the situation at a dynamic protest will change frequently and rapidly, scouts need to check around and report back often. It's a good idea to appoint a pair of group members as scouts.

Don't act on rumours. It's common at demonstrations for someone to approach a group of activists shouting, "The riot cops are coming!" As often as not, of course, there are no police coming at all. These people may be panicking, or may be agents trying to disrupt you. Acting on bad information can be dangerous. All critical information must be verified. If the person conveying info can't claim to have witnessed something directly, or if he or she is a stranger, then that information is unreliable.

Assume the riot cops will come. It shouldn't be surprising when the "authorities" do decide to blockade, surround, penetrate or break up a demonstration. This happens frequently, and the key to not being caught off guard is to stay prepared.

Don't panic; help others stay calm. Sometimes at actions, the situation grows just plain frightening. But panic reduces critical judgment, adapting and coping abilities, and it can spread rapidly. Our best defence in a crisis is our collective cool - keeping each other centered & focused. If you can't stay focused and centered, then you need to quit the demo to chill. Similarly, if someone else can't be calmed down, they need to leave.

Be prepared to be photographed. If you don't want to be photographed by the police or media at an action, the only sure antidote is to not attend. There is simply no guarantee that you will not be later identified, almost no matter how you attempt to disguise yourself. Assume some photographers are working for the police.

Know your options, and what you and your comrades intend to do, in case of arrest or injury. This document cannot cover the various paths you may choose in case you or someone in your group is detained or arrested during an action. In order to be aware of how to prepare for and respond to such situations, you should seek training and advice from the team providing legal & medical services to activists at a particular demo. The legal information changes from city to city.

Solidarity: A Rough Guide

By Starhawk

How solidarity works:

We have more power when we act together than when we act alone. Solidarity is the way we protect each other in our struggles, share the consequences and mitigate the suffering we encounter when confronting oppressive power. The purpose of

solidarity is to build our movement, and to embody our mutual care and concern for justice.

Solidarity works best when we respect each other's differing needs and life circumstances, understand that there are many ways of being in solidarity, and co-ordinate our responses. It does not work when we attempt to coerce, shame or inflict guilt upon each other, even subtly.

Through solidarity, we can pressure the system to treat us fairly and justly, to protect the physical safety and health of jailed protestors, to treat arrested protestors equally, to prevent individuals from being singled out, to improve jail conditions, to resist harsh or unequal punishment or sentences that would constrict our future freedom. We can protect individuals who come from targeted communities or who face greater risks in a jail situation: people of color, people who are gay, lesbian, transgendered, differently abled, people with health conditions, and, vital in this current political situation, immigrants and people without papers or citizenship.

Solidarity puts pressure on the system by raising the social and political costs of its oppressive acts, raising the economic costs of holding us in jail or bringing us to trial, and by interfering with the smooth running of the system. Solidarity can be extremely effective, but it is always exercised at a cost. Before deciding on a solidarity strategy, we need to know what our intentions and goals are for any given action.

Outside support:

For any form of solidarity to work, supporters are vital. Their job is to bring to bear political pressure on the authorities: calling, writing letters, sending emails, holding vigils at the jail, contacting the media, and organizing others to do all of the same. Released prisoners can be in solidarity with those still in jail by participating in outside support. Support should be organized ahead of time for all actions.

Legal support:

Solidarity negotiations are most often carried out by the legal team, who need to understand the protestors' strategy, be willing to furnish information and help with communications, and to understand that a solidarity strategy may be very different from a usual legal strategy. Solidarity choices need to be made by the activists, not by the lawyers. The legal team does not make decisions for the protestors, but serves as their messenger and mouthpiece.

Protestors need to understand that legal teams for actions are made up of volunteers who do not have unlimited resources. If solidarity continues for a long time, if it moves into court or cases go to trial, additional legal support will be necessary and so will fundraising to pay for it.

Strategic choices:

There are many ways to exercise solidarity, and many choices to make along the way. The key choice that needs to be discussed before the action is:

Stay in jail or not:

In-jail solidarity uses our strength of numbers to raise the political and economic costs of the system. It cost the authorities both economically and politically to keep large numbers of people locked up after an action, especially if we can mobilize outside pressure. Large numbers of people in jail can give us lots of leverage with the system.

But stay-in-jail strategies are very costly to us, as well. In situations where jail conditions are extremely hazardous to the very life and safety of protestors, we want to get people out of jail as quickly as possible and mobilize pressure in other ways. In an extended action, or when the authorities use preemptive arrests to undercut our numbers, we may want to get people back on the street quickly. When legal consequences of an action are likely to be minor, an in-jail strategy may not be worth the cost. And people may also have individual reasons for getting out of jail as fast as they can: family responsibilities, medical conditions that put them at risk in a jail situation, work responsibilities, etc. Stay-in-jail strategies work best with larger numbers, but they do not require unanimity to work. We want to encourage people to do actions whether or not they can stay in jail afterwards. Solidarity is no longer effective movement building if the costs of an action become so high that only the extremely heroic or the chronically unemployed can do actions. When people feel judged or coerced into solidarity stands, they often react against the whole idea and may be reluctant to do future actions. When people feel supported in their choices, they will often make great personal sacrifices to support the group.

If we're trying to keep people out on the street for an extended action, or if projected legal consequences are slight, we might want to take opportunities to get quickly released from custody. If we have people to protect: individuals who might be singled out, internationals who face immigration issues, etc., we might employ a strategy that involves staying in jail until everyone is released. Or if we are asked to make unacceptable compromises in order to be released, for example, posting high bail or accepting conditions that might prevent us from doing future actions, we may need to use in-jail solidarity.

A stay-in-jail solidarity strategy needs some coordination before the action, so that people are prepared and know what choices to make under the stressful conditions of arrest.

How to Stay in Jail:

Refuse to sign out:

In mass actions, authorities are often willing to release most people if they sign a promise to appear for a court date, or if they post a reasonable bail. The authorities may also ask people to sign statements saying they will not return to a certain action or area.

To stay in jail, refuse to sign or to post bail.

Bail is one of the ways the poor are kept incarcerated and people with money get released. Some activists refuse to post bail as part of their moral or political stand. For others, the choice may depend upon the situation.

Refuse to give names:

Authorities are generally reluctant to free prisoners without knowing who we are. For this tactic to be effective, protestors should not carry identification to the action. For this reason, it needs to be coordinated ahead of time. This tactic also greatly interferes with the smooth running of the jail system, and is a tactic generally hated by the authorities. It can be a powerful bargaining point in solidarity negotiations.

However, it's a bargaining point we most often concede in the end. Protestors should not hold the illusion that they will be able to go through the entire system and be released without giving names. Occasionally this happens, but generally not. Supporters should hold the I.D. of those arrested and be prepared to bring it to jail or court, if necessary.

For some activists, giving their name is a matter of pride and principle, an integral part of their understanding of nonviolence, and of being willing to stand behind their actions.

Protestors who need medication may not be able to employ this tactic, as generally to receive meds you need a name and a prescription.

Additional tactics:

Refuse to cooperate with other aspects of processing: not furnishing information, fingerprints, etc.

Refuse to voluntarily go to or cooperate with court appearances or to enter pleas.

Resistance in jail:

In jail, many forms of resistance can be employed to protect other protestors from being isolated, singled out, or physically hurt, to pressure the authorities to provide physical necessities, medical care, interpreters, phone calls, access to lawyers, etc. and to protect those at greater risk. They range from refusing to move voluntarily or cooperate with jail procedures, singing, going limp, physically protecting individuals ('puppy piling'), refusing to answer questions or to speak, fasting, etc. Resistance can be stressful and dangerous, and it's wise to choose your battles and conserve energy for issues that are truly important.

A liaison to the guards is often helpful in jail, as they will feel more comfortable negotiating with one person. However, that role should rotate often so that individuals aren't targeted as leaders. To organize in jail, keep a neutral profile and avoid confronting the guards.

Guards fear riots, and are always on the lookout for potential instigators. They will often single out aggressive individuals. Whatever your views are on violence and nonviolence, fighting the guards inside jail will simply get you isolated, hurt, and possibly result in extra charges.

Fasting can be a powerful strategic tool, but it will rapidly cloud your judgment and make decision-making extremely difficult. It's most effective when there is outside support and media attention. Consider appointing a 'designated eater' to help care for and monitor the health of fasters.

Resistance inside jail can also be creative. We can use the time to share skills, teach each other organizing tools, hold political discussions, plan the next action. We can also at times share songs, rituals, poems, jokes, stories, and many forms of mutual support and healing. And of course, to hold meetings to decide upon our strategy. But don't meet all the time: endless meetings can be exhausting and counterproductive.

Remember that jail cells and phones are monitored. Jail is not the place to regale your fellow protestors with tales of your fifty-three previous arrests. If people are withholding names, try to avoid discussing details that could identify you. Support people should know ahead of time what jail name you will use, so they can be prepared to receive collect calls from 'Muffie'.

Solidarity demands:

There are many demands that we might make through solidarity, but generally they involve pressure for equal and fair treatment in jail and in sentencing, for dropped or reduced charges or for a plea bargain we can accept that will not be a deterrent to future actions.

The legal system operates like a giant game in which deals are made every day for people's lives. Most people caught in the system do not have the leverage and resources we do. As we negotiate our demands, we will have many choices to make, and we should bear in mind that we may not be able to achieve all of our demands.

Pressure for equal treatment or sentencing is most effective when people have all done roughly the same thing. In most legal systems, there is a big divide between acts considered as freedom of expression and acts of property destruction or aggression. Often the authorities falsely accuse people of violent acts, or charge a victim of their violence with assault on an officer. When they do not have a solid case, they can often be pressured to drop or reduce charges. But if they actually have evidence against an individual, they may be unwilling to reduce charges regardless of the strength of our solidarity.

If police have been injured or seriously lost face in an action, they may close ranks in their own form of solidarity and become adamantly intent on punishing somebody.

Court and plea solidarity:

When we do not choose to use a stay-in-jail strategy, or when we agree to move our solidarity out of jail and into the courts, there are still many strategies we can use, but the details are more conditioned by the specific legal procedures of each province, state or country. The principles remain the same: strength in numbers, respect for individual choices, coordination not coercion, raising the system's cost, and bringing to bear outside pressure.

When individuals are singled out in spite of all our efforts, our solidarity can move to support for them as they face trial, in the form of fundraising, political pressure, courtroom vigils, etc.

Solidarity with other prisoners:

The authorities often try to intimidate us by threatening to throw us in with regular prisoners. They may paint fearful and racist pictures of just how bad those other prisoners can be. Most often, however, other prisoners are supportive or at least neutral toward protestors who behave with respect toward them.

The criminal justice system in both Canada and the U.S. is more criminal than just, and serves as one of the prime ways poor people, people of color and oppressed groups are kept disenfranchised and disempowered. When we enter into this system as a group of protestors, we hold a privileged level of personal and political power. When we exercise that power, we need to keep in mind the impact of our presence on prisoners who do not have our resources. A jail experience can teach us more in a short time about the true workings of oppression than years of study. We have an obligation to use that knowledge, and our rage, to work for true justice for all prisoners..

**Organizing in Jail:
Some Suggestions**

The prison system controls us, among other ways, by controlling the space we inhabit, the way our time is structured, and the information we can send and receive. We can take by organizing, as much as possible, our own space, time and information.

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATIONS:

Find out who has been arrested, which affinity groups are in jail, who if anyone is missing or has been isolated. Consolidate the information so that in one or two phone calls it can be communicated to our legal team and support people.

Organize our own system of lines or lists to use telephones. Transmit messages for others.

Use legal team to communicate with others of our groups held in other locations.

Liason people can find out jail schedule and post it.

Remember, information from the guards, however nice they may seem, is not necessarily accurate. DON'T SPREAD RUMORS! Verify information.

Share information and stories about the action among ourselves.

SPACE:

When possible, organize our own space in jail: a meeting corner, a quiet corner, a healing space, a workshop space etc.

TIME:

The time we spend together in jail can be enriching. We can organize workshops, classes, nonviolence trainings, political discussions, strategy and theory sessions, games, rituals, exercise sessions, music, talent shows, quiet times and of course, meetings. Remember not to become obsessed by meetings.

Don't become panicked by their timetable. We can take the time we need to do what we have to do.

SUGGESTED JAIL ORIENTATION:

(When you have the opportunity to meet.)

- Collect information on who has been arrested, isolated, medical needs, etc.
- Develop strategy for getting that info to supporters.
- Update on information on the action, legal issues, negotiations.
- Roles and responsibilities in the group—caretakers, liasons, etc.
- Clustering—make sure everyone has an affinity group or buddy.
- Feeling sharing—perhaps a round on how we each deal with powerlessness
- Jail culture:
Who are the guards? The other prisoners?

General population—an opportunity to learn and organize, not a fate worse than death!

Strategies of the guards and police:

Intimidation: Fear and pain

Divide and conquer.

Isolation.

Singling out leaders, instigators

Good cop/bad cop.

Lies and disinformation.

Veneer—looking good in public, stacked negotiations

- Legal system review—stages of the process, what to expect next
- Process review—consensus, etc.
- Jail tales—share previous experiences (with great caution, remembering conversations are probably monitored.)
- Questions, feeling, fears
- Evaluation/closing

Jail/Court Solidarity

by Midnight Special and Katya Komisaruk.

Jail/court solidarity is the name for a variety of tactics we use to take care of each other while we're in the legal system. Jail/court solidarity involves a combination of non-cooperation techniques and collective bargaining. Although jails and courts are designed to make us feel powerless, through solidarity we can gain better control over what happens to us, by making decisions as a group; by acting in unity with each other; and by committing ourselves to safeguard each other's well being. Jail/court solidarity has been used effectively in the civil rights, peace, environmental, and other movements to protect activists who were arrested. Every time there's a choice in the legal process, activists can either cooperate or make things more difficult for the authorities. Solidarity tactics mean that people non-cooperate as a group, unless the authorities agree to their demands. People who've been arrested could demand that everyone receive the same charges and the same sentence, instead of some people (i.e., leaders, minorities, anarchists) being singled out for harsher treatment. People in custody could demand that a sick or hurt person be given immediate medical treatment. People in jail may want to demand that any person the authorities locked up separately be brought back and held with the rest of the group. Types of non-cooperation include:

Physical Non-Cooperation Techniques

refusing to follow orders (they say stand, we sit; they say line up, we mill about)

refusing to walk

refusing to hold still

refusing to stop singing or dancing

refusing to eat

refusing to wear clothes Procedural Non-Cooperation Techniques

not bringing ID and refusing to give name or answer other questions (which forces the authorities to keep us locked up, clogging the jail system)

refusing to promise to appear in court (which also forces the authorities to keep people locked up, clogging the jail system)

demanding to have the court appoint a free attorney to defend every low-income defendant (which creates a vast amount of paperwork for the court and prosecution, as well as a huge expense for the authorities)

refusing to plead guilty (which forces the authorities to hold trials, clogging the court system)

refusing to waive time for a speedy trial (which forces authorities to bring everyone to trial within a month or so of our first court appearance, as opposed to scheduling trials to start long after, at the authorities' convenience)

fighting the case vigorously before trial by submitting a lot of motions (written legal arguments, to which the prosecutor will need to respond) and requiring lots of hearings in court

Remember that physical non-cooperation-as opposed to procedural non-cooperation, could potentially result in charges of resisting an officer-but that's often just threatened and not actually imposed. There are many creative ways to non-cooperate beyond this short list, and it's good to mix-and-match. Groups should make sure to talk in advance about which solidarity demands and which types of non-cooperation they might want to use. It's not necessary for everyone in the group to participate in a given non-cooperation tactic in order for it to work. And sometimes one or two people may choose to non-cooperate in a particular way by themselves, as their own political statement. (For example, perhaps just one or two people want to go limp when they're arrested, or fast when they're in jail.) However, to use noncooperation as a solidarity tactic effectively you need enough people participating to overwhelm the authorities, forcing them to agree to demands.

The use of jail/court solidarity should not deter anyone from participating in the action. Pressure for everyone to conform is counter to the spirit of solidarity. People who employ jail/court solidarity tactics need to leave plenty of room for those who do not wish to join them. Not everyone can stay in jail. Not everyone can go to court. But then, not everyone has to participate in order for solidarity tactics to work. The strength of solidarity comes from the voluntary agreement of everyone who takes part in it, and from the support from those who cannot.

Much of the time, we're working in coalition with people who hold varying political beliefs. Often the larger group includes people of different races, classes, ages, sexual orientations, etc. It's far easier to reach consensus on solidarity tactics if we listen closely to all points of view before launching proposals.

We must never let the police, the jail authorities or any lawyers push us into rushed

decisions. If we're being rushed, we just have to bargain for more time. After all, it's simpler for the authorities to give us another fifteen minutes to come to consensus than for them to carry a bus-full or room-full of limp bodies to jail.

Crime and Punishment: Frequently Asked Questions

(prepared by the Midnight Special Law Collective)

What crimes could we be charged with?

Protesters are usually charged with infractions (a crime usually not punishable by jail time) or misdemeanors (a crime punishable by a year in jail or less). Typical infractions are jaywalking or driving beyond the speed limit. Typical misdemeanors are trespassing, blocking the road, causing minor property damage or resisting an officer. Sometimes activists are charged with felonies (a crime punishable by prison time), such as conspiracy or major property damage. However, in past mass civil resistance, these felony charges have typically been dropped. Prosecutors tend to use them as a scare tactic or bargaining tool and will often pile up multiple charges, in order to be able to say: "We're charging the defendants with damaging property, resisting an officer, and trespass; but we'll drop the first two charges, if they'll plead guilty to the trespass charge."

Can the charges against us be changed?

Charges which police write down when they arrest us are not necessarily the charges a prosecutor uses. The arresting officer's charges are a suggestion. It's the prosecutor who decides the real charges, and s/he can change them up until we actually start trial. Charges are a matter for negotiation using solidarity.

Is it really a crime merely to touch a police officer?

Yes. Simply touching an officer with our fingers is usually an "assault" or "battery." Officers can lay hands on us, but we must not initiate contact with them with any part of our bodies or our belongings. Don't touch police vehicles, dogs, horses or other equipment. They are considered extensions of the officer.

What exactly is resisting an officer?

Resisting an officer is physical, not verbal. Even passive physical resistance, such as going limp, is legally considered resisting an officer. However, refusing to answer questions is not resisting, because you always have the right to remain silent.

What if we give names other than our "legal name?"

It is a misdemeanor to give a false name-or other false information-to a police officer,

under both state and federal law.

What happens if we damage property?

Property damage which has occurred in previous mass civil resistance actions has included things like: cutting fences, painting messages, dismantling train tracks, etc. The penalties for property damage almost always include fines and/or restitution, as well as incarceration. The laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, in the federal system, property damage of over \$100 is a felony. The bill for even a little graffiti cleanup is often well over the felony limit.

CAUTION!

If you bring weapons (including your trusty pocket knife or Leatherman tool) or illegal drugs to the action, you are likely to get additional charges-maybe very serious ones. Double-check your pockets and bags. It creates hassles for everyone and puts a major strain on solidarity if you get busted for drugs or weapons.

Lawyers...what's the use?

In a mass direct action, our best protection is solidarity. However, lawyers are useful for passing messages between groups of protesters who are being held in different places (different institutions or different cells in the same jail), or for dealing with problems (like getting medication in jail). When a lawyer arrives, make sure to use good meeting techniques. Select a facilitator or two among the protesters to organize questions and proposals.

How do we use our legal team?

Call as soon as you can. Call when you're about to be arrested; when you're on the bus to jail; when you get to jail. When the legal team visits you in custody, they will be expecting the facilitator to take the group through the following legal visit agenda:

Are there any emergencies which must be dealt with before we can proceed with other topics?

Do you want a report on what other groups of arrested protesters are doing and on the state of negotiations with the authorities?

Have you made decisions about solidarity tactics or demands which you want communicated to other groups of protesters or to the authorities?

Is there any legal information you need which will help you make decisions? Organize your questions and directions in advance, to make the best use of the meeting time.

CAUTION!

The police or jail authorities frequently lie and say there isn't a lawyer there for us or that we must name a specific lawyer. Very often there's a lawyer from our legal team waiting

anxiously to talk to us, who won't be allowed in until we exert pressure through solidarity tactics. It helps if our lawyer knows our names or jail identification numbers, but we don't have to know a specific lawyer's name. We can just demand to see "someone from the legal team."

Police

When dealing with the police, keep your hands in view and don't make sudden movements. Also, avoid passing behind them. Never touch the police or their equipment (vehicles, flashlights, animals, etc.)

When we are involved in or observing an interaction with the police, we should always note what is

said and by whom. Record the officers' names and badge numbers. Immediately after the police interaction, make a copy of the Police Misconduct Report and fill it out. Do it promptly so you can remember important details clearly. Familiarize yourself with the Police Misconduct Report in advance so you'll know what to look for.

Questioning

Whenever law enforcement officers ask us anything besides name and address, it's legally safest to say these Magic Words: "I am going to remain silent. I want a lawyer." Remember, anything we say to the authorities can and will be used against us and our friends in court. There's no way to predict what the police might try to use or how they'd use it. Plus, the police might misquote us or lie altogether about what was said. So it's good to make a habit of saying only the Magic Words and letting everyone know that this is our policy.

Be aware that the authorities are legally allowed to lie when they're investigating, and they are trained to be manipulative. Insist upon speaking with friends and lawyers before you answer any questions or produce any documents.

If you don't think you'll remember the Magic Words when you need them, write them on your body, preferably with something that won't wash off too easily (permanent markers work well.) Make sure that when you're arrested with other people, the rest of the group knows the Magic Words and promises to use them.

There are a lot of ways the police will try to trick you into talking. It's always safest just to say the Magic Words: "I am going to remain silent. I want a lawyer." The following are common lines the police use when they're trying to get you to talk:

You're not a suspect. We're simply investigating here. Just help us understand what happened and then you can go."

"If you don't answer my questions, I won't have any choice but to take you to jail."

“Your friends have all cooperated and we let them go home. You’re the only one left. Do you want to go to jail?”

“If you don’t answer these questions, you’ll be charged with resisting an officer.”

If you’re arrested with friends, make an agreement that no one will make statements to the police until everyone’s been able to talk to a lawyer and calmly decide what to do.

Be aware of the paranoia which tends to set in after people have been separated.

Be particularly suspicious if you are in custody and an officer (or an unfamiliar person claiming to be a lawyer) comes and tells you that everyone else has agreed to a particular deal or to leave jail. Demand to see a trusted lawyer or another activist to verify this information.

When you’re in jail, remember to be careful of what you say. Use each others nicknames. Above all, do not ask for or accept legal advice from law enforcement officers. They are not there your advocates. Remember that they’ve been trained to put you at ease, to get you to trust them. Their job is to find, arrest and help convict the suspect. And that suspect is you.

Searches and Warrants

Do not consent when the police ask to enter and search your home without a search warrant. Don’t let them invite themselves in. Stand in the doorway and refuse to give them permission. The police are quite likely to tell you they don’t need a warrant. It’s always safest to reply: “I do not consent to this search.”

If police have a search warrant, ask to see it and check that it’s signed and has your correct address and a reasonably recent date (not more than a couple of weeks). If you point out a flaw in a warrant, the police may ask you to let them in anyway. Just say no. Even if the police have a warrant which looks perfectly okay to you, it still makes sense to say “I do not consent to this search,” because it’s possible that there’s a hidden flaw in the warrant which your lawyer may be able to find later on.

You should refuse consent to searches of your car, bags and any other possessions by saying “I do not consent” may seem a little formal, but it helps keep the police from claiming that they thought copy with affinity group supporters, and leave copies with your legal and medical teams. Obviously, these letters may disclose your identity, which interferes with the solidarity tactic of withholding information. One way to handle this is to give your doctor a photo of yourself to go with the letter, and have the doctor refer to you as “the patient in the attached photograph,” rather than by name.

Other Legal Resources

Just Cause www.lawcollective.org • katya@lawcollective.org

6103 Harwood Ave. • Oakland, CA 94618 • (510)420-0210

How to Be a Legal Observer
Legal Observer Notes Form
Police Misconduct Form
National Lawyer's Guild www.nlg.org

Midnight Special Law Collective www.midnightspecial.net
(510) 834-1883

What to Bring to An Action!

In a Warm Climate:

Wear Layers:

- Pants with deep pockets
- Long pants even in hot climates.
- A tee shirt and long sleeved shirt for sun protection.
- Sweaters, sweatshirts or jackets as needed.

Appropriate colors, capes, patches, costumes, scarves, etc.

- A sun hat!!!
- Raingear may be necessary.

(Have a second outfit for a second day of action, if tear gas is a possibility.)

Sturdy walking shoes (waterproof boots if rain is likely, if not, sneakers may help you move faster.

- Sunscreen (water based, not oil-based as tear gas and pepper spray bond to oil.

- A light daypack or waist pack for food, change of clothes, etc.
- A money belt/waist belt is handy for ID, some cash, etc.
- Water! A water bottle, waistbelt, or other system for carrying water is useful.
- A bandanna.
- Food - trail mix, protein bars, compact stuff to munch on during the day.

Some nice things to have;

- A drum, rattle, finger cymbals, etc.
- Sidewalk chalk.
- A cell phone. (Don't forget your charger.)
- A watch.
- Rescue remedy.
- Toilet paper.
- Patches, banners, signs, flags, etc. Think of ways to write your message on what you wear as well as what you carry.
- Extra glasses or contacts.

- Fingernail clippers (will cut through plastic handcuffs.)
- Wear two pair of underwear if you are at risk of arrest if you can keep them both in jail you'll have one to wear and one to wash.
- Extra tampons or pads.

For gas protection:

- A bandanna, soaked in vinegar or lemon juice, kept in a ziplock baggie to conserve moisture.

- And shatterproof goggles.

Or

- A paint mask or filter.

Or

- A gas mask.

- Water bottles with squirt tops for washing eyes.

Check with the medics for other supplies (solutions of half water, half Maalox or other liquid antacid are recommended for tear gas) (but NOT mint-flavored!)

If you wear glasses: Either find goggles to fit over or put them on a string so you can take them off and put goggles on instead.

If you wear contact lenses: Contacts should be removed if you are hit with tear gas or pepper spray I save my disposables when they can still take an extra day's wear, wear them into action so I can just pop them out and drop them quickly if necessary. I carry my glasses or a spare pair of lenses. If yours are not disposable, keep a case with you and be prepared to remove them quickly.

What to bring to the overall mobilization:

- At least two street outfits for multiple days of action, in case one gets tear-gassed.
- One nicer outfit for doing media interviews if needed.
- Layers of clothes for a variety of temperatures.
- Bedding if needed.
- Big markers.
- Art supplies.
- Cloth for banners, etc. (or make ahead and bring.)
- Your own cup, plate silverware for those Food Not Bombs meals.
- Originals for flyers, informational materials, etc. that you can get copied as needed

A Checklist for the Consensus Process

These are just some of the many ways to conduct a meeting using the consensus process. Roles should be carried out by everyone as needed — not just the person specially designated. Basic Procedure:

Before the meeting (or at previous meeting):

Choose facilitator(s)
Gather agenda items
Determine presenter/initiator for each item
Determine item type: announcement, report,
discussion, decision
Bring materials/supplies needed

At the meeting:

Connect (game, song, ritual, etc.)
Check-in/excitement-sharing
Agenda review: agree on order and time
Choose notetaker, timekeeper, vibeswatcher
Step through the agenda (big or little first?)
Take breaks
Announcements
Set next meeting
Evaluation (good, bad, better)
Closing (game, song, ritual, etc.)

The Flow of a Cooperative Decision-Making Process**Background**

What are we talking about? .Issue raised- what is the problem?
Clarify problem — put it in context

Discuss, bring out a diversity of ideas, concerns, and perspectives — look at possible solutions and the problems with those solutions

Develop Proposal /Proposal Made

Clarifying Questions
Concerns
Discussion / Friendly Amendments
Re-state Proposal

Test for Consensus

Strong concerns /objections
Stand Asides
Blocks
Consensus

Establish how the decision will be implemented
Make sure there are no loose ends
Restate the decision for the notetaker (including implementation)

Tools for Successful Meetings

Brainstorms, Popcorn (no order, just popping in)
Go around the circle, rounds

Stacking (count off - limit to 3-5),
Small-group discussion, dyads, triads
Advantages/disadvantages chart
Straw Polls – sense of group
Visual aids, Visible notes
Criteria Process
Goals'/priorities-setting techniques, dots
Challenges/devil's advocate questions
Participation equalizers (pebbles, etc.)
Active listening in pairs
Support groups/caucuses, Feelings sharing
Fishbowls, Role plays
Evaluations, Food

Typical Tasks of Facilitators

Helps formulate agenda
Helps establish a hopeful, upbeat, and safe atmosphere
Helps group work through decisions:
 Calls on Speakers
 Asks for clarification
 Summarizes, sorts, focuses discussion — lists threads of
 thought, agreements, and disagreements
 Helps prioritize and order discussion topics
 Brings out all viewpoints
 Looks for underlying agreements
 Synthesizes differences
 Restates Proposal, Limits proposals on floor
 Formalizes Decisions
Encourages equal participation
 Draws out quiet people
 Limits Talkers
Uses Facilitation Tools
Stays neutral while facilitating

Typical Tasks of a Vibeswatcher ("Caretaker")

Watches the **process** of the meeting
Notices underlying feelings from tone of voice and body
 language, points out tension and weariness,
 recommends changes
Stops bad process (domineering, guilt-tripping,
 interrupting, put-downs, bulldozing, defensiveness,
 space-outs, etc.)
Helps resolve conflicts
Helps work out negative emotions (fear, anger, anxiety,
 hopelessness)

Suggests tools to improve meetings
Helps create a safe, accepting tone
Deals with outside distractions

Tools for Stress-Reduction/Conflict Resolution

Stretch breaks/cooperative games
Singing
Humor
Affirmations
Feelings sharing
Silence (mediation, prayer)
Calm voice
Making LOUD noises
Eye contact
Breathing (deep)
Back rubs
Fears in the hat
Appreciations/affirmations
Active listening
I-messages
Restating other's viewpoint / modeling opposite views
Support groups / Caucuses
Venting emotions somewhere else
Gripe sessions – share feelings
Resentment sharing
Fishbowls
Spectrums
Expulsion – based on agreements, questions

Consensus Process

from:

<http://www.activism.net/peace/nvcdh/consensus.htm>

What Is Consensus?

Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a democratic method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust.

What Does Consensus Mean?

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Since our society provides very little training in these areas, we have to unlearn many behavior patterns in order to practice good consensus process (see "Overcoming Oppressive Behavior," in this handbook). Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is the most

efficient way to accomplish something, or that they are absolutely sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her or his position on the matter wasn't considered carefully. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when consensus works properly, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals.

Roles in Consensus Process

In large groups, it is helpful to designate roles for people to help the process move along. It is important to rotate these responsibilities for each meeting so that skills and power can be shared. Ideally, such responsibilities should belong to everyone, and not just the designated person.

Facilitator

The facilitator's job is to help the group move through the agreed-upon agenda, and to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak by calling on them in order. Facilitators should see that speaking opportunities are evenly distributed; that quiet people get a chance to speak and people who talk too much are given a chance to listen. The facilitator should observe when the discussion seems to be nearing the point when a proposal could be made. S/he can then call for a proposal or offer one to the group, and after more discussion if necessary, s/he can then guide the group through the check for consensus as outlined above. Facilitators should not use their position as a platform from which to offer solutions; solutions should arise from the group, and no-one should facilitate if they find they have strong opinions on a given issue. A facilitator can always hand over her or his responsibilities temporarily if s/he feels it necessary to step down. The group should not rely upon the facilitator to solve process problems, but should be ready to help with suggestions on how to proceed. Very large groups should use two or more facilitators.

Vibeswatcher

Vibeswatchers are useful in large groups where people don't know each other, and their job is to be attuned to the emotional state of the group. Is the group tense, or bored, or too silly? The vibeswatcher might suggest a game, or more light, or open windows, or a group hug. Sometimes simply calling attention to an emotional undercurrent that may be affecting group process is helpful. Vibeswatchers should also call the group's attention to a person whose anger or fear is being ignored, or to people who may be involved in a dialogue that has its causes outside of the group's activities. Vibeswatchers also should assume the role of "gatekeeper," taking care of any external disturbance for the group.

Timekeeper

A timekeeper keeps the group on track by giving the group a warning halfway through that discussion time is running out and by asking the group if it wants to contract for more time on a given issue. Timekeepers should ask if people want to set specific time

limits on brainstorming or time allotments to each speaker on go-rounds. Before speaking themselves, timekeepers should be sure that someone else is timekeeping for that period.

Notetaker

A notetaker tries to clearly record key points of discussions, the consensus decisions reached by the group, things that were left to be decided later, and who has taken on responsibilities for particular tasks. The group (or the facilitator for the next meeting) should be able to use the notes to construct the agenda for the next meeting. A notetaker can also be helpful during the meeting to remind the group of key points covered in discussion if the group is having trouble formulating a proposal. It's important to emphasize that every member of the group should try to facilitate, viceswatch, timekeep, and notetake. Sharing the responsibility ensures that power is distributed equally within the group and makes consensus easier on everyone.

Difficulties in Reaching Consensus

If enough discussion has occurred, and everyone has equally participated, there should not be a group decision which cannot be supported by everyone. But depending on the importance of the decision, the external conditions, and how the process has gone, the group might be on the verge of reaching a decision you cannot support. There are several ways of expressing your objections:

Non-support: "I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along with the group."

Reservations: "I think this may be a mistake, but I can live with it."

Standing Aside: "I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it."

Blocking: "I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's moral values, they are obligated to block consensus. A decision by an affinity group spokesperson can only be blocked by an entire affinity group, not by an individual. Blocks will rarely occur if the group has fully discussed a proposal.

Withdrawing from the group. Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations, or leave the group temporarily through standing aside, there may not be a viable decision even if no-one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and is just as desirable as a lukewarm bath or a lukewarm beer. If consensus is blocked and no new consensus is reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. Major philosophical or moral questions that come up with each affinity group should be worked through as soon as the group forms. Discussions about values and goals are as important as discussions about actions to be taken, and too frequently get pushed aside by groups who feel time pressures.

Decision-making During Actions

It is clear that consensus is a time consuming activity. It is therefore important for affinity groups to make their fundamental decisions prior to going to an action. Discuss in advance such questions as: What do we do if faced with a provocateur in our group or a nearby group? How long do we want to stay on site? How do we respond to police strategies designed to keep us away from the site? It helps for an affinity group to define for itself its particular goals, or tone. Such general definitions as "Our group will always go where numbers are most needed," or "We want to be where we will get media coverage," or "We want to leaflet workers inside the site," will help a group make decisions under stressful and changing circumstances. Be prepared for unexpected circumstances by selecting a spokesperson and a facilitator for your group for quick-decision making process during the action. It will be the spokesperson's responsibility to communicate the group's decisions to the action or cluster spokescouncil. It is the facilitator's responsibility to quickly and succinctly articulate the problem to be discussed and to eliminate those points where agreement has already been reached. It is the responsibility of everyone in the group to keep the discussion to a minimum if quick action is called for. If your point has already been made by someone else, don't restate it. A calm approach and a clear desire to come to an agreement quickly can help the process. Don't let anxiety overwhelm your trust in each other or your purpose in the action. Strong objections should be limited to matters of principle.

Tools for Consensus Process

Check-ins

Usually used for introductions, but besides names, people can tell the group how they're feeling (anxious, silly, tired), or what they expect from the meeting (certain decisions, certain length). A group might adjust their agenda according to the emotional state or practical needs revealed by the group during check-in.

Go-rounds

Each person is given a certain amount of time to speak on a particular subject, without having to comment on other contributions, or defend their own. Should be used at the beginning of discussion on an issue, if only a few people are doing the talking, or if the group seems stuck for good solutions.

Brainstorms

a short time during which people can call out suggestions, concerns, or ideas randomly, sometimes without being called on. Helps to get out a lot of ideas fast, stimulates creative thinking. It's not a time for discussion or dialogue. Someone can write down brainstorm ideas on a large sheet of paper so everyone can see and remember them.

Breaking up into small groups

Depending on the size of the original group, this could be from three to a whole affinity group. A small group gets a chance to talk things over for a specified amount of time before reporting back to the large group. This gives people a chance to really listen to each other and express themselves, and is very useful when a group seems unable to come to consensus. In a spokescouncil meeting, breaking up into affinity groups to discuss issues or to make specific decisions is often necessary.

Fishbowl

In a large group, or a small group which seems hopelessly divided, a fishbowl helps to make clear what's at stake in particular positions. A few people, particularly those who feel strongest about an issue, sit down together in the middle of the group and hash things out freely for a designated period of time while the group observes them. The people in the middle don't come to any decisions, but the fishbowl gives everyone a chance to hear the debate without involving the whole group; often hidden solutions are revealed.

Activism.net / <freedom@activism.spam.net>

"America is a melting pot. Those on the bottom get burned and the scum rises to the top."

-Edward Abbey-

Hints for De-Escalating a Conflict:

- Take a deep breath to stay relaxed.
- Look the other person in the eye, with both of you sitting or standing.
- Speak softly and slowly.
- Keep your legs and arms uncrossed. Do not clench your fists or purse your lips.
- Keep reminding yourself: "We can find a win-win resolution to this," and remind the other person of this too.
- If necessary, ask for a break to collect your thoughts or release pent-up tension.
- Give "I messages."
- Paraphrase what the other person has said, asking for clarification as necessary.
- Watch your language. Words that escalate a conflict are: never, always, unless, can't, won't, don't, should, and shouldn't. Words that de-escalate a conflict are: maybe perhaps, sometimes, what if, it seems like, I feel, I think , and I wonder.
- Really listen to what the other person is saying, with the goal of truly understanding that person's point of view.

- Affirm and acknowledge the other person's position.
- Ask questions that encourage the other person to look for a solution. Ask open-ended questions rather than ones that evoke a yes or no response.
- Keep looking for alternative ideas to resolve your dispute so that both of you have your needs met.

10- Step Communication Breakthrough

Try these suggestions to get your message across:

1. **TALK DIRECTLY:** If there is no threat of physical violence, talk directly to the person with whom you have the problem.
2. **CHOOSE A GOOD TIME AND PLACE:** Discuss the conflict in a quiet place, when you and the other person are not busy or rushed.
3. **PLAN AHEAD:** Think about what you want to say ahead of time. Be able to state clearly what the problem is and how it affects you.
4. **GIVE INFORMATION:** For example, say something like: "When your car blocks my driveway, I get angry because I can't get to work on time." Try not to say things like: "You are blocking my driveway on purpose just to make me mad!"
5. **DON'T BLAME OR NAMECALL:** Blaming and namecalling will only antagonize the other person, and make it harder for him or her to understand your concerns.
6. **LISTEN:** During the discussion, relax. Give the other person a chance to tell his or her side of the story completely, and try to learn how he or she feels about the situation.
7. **SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING:** Although you may not agree with what is being said, tell the other person you hear what he or she is saying, and are glad you are discussing the problem together.
8. **TALK IT ALL THROUGH:** Once you start, get all of the issues and feelings out into the open. Don't leave out the part that seems too "difficult" to discuss or too "insignificant" to be important. Your solution will work best if all the issues are discussed thoroughly.
9. **WORK ON A SOLUTION:** When you have reached this point in the discussion, be as specific as possible: "I will turn my music off at midnight." Not: "I won't play loud music anymore."

10. FOLLOW THROUGH: Agree to check with each other at specific times to make sure the agreement is still working. Then really do it.

Copyright Community Boards of San Francisco

Voicing and Hearing Complaints

What works in voicing and hearing complaints:

Key principles:

- People who complain are great. They just have something that doesn't work for them and they are willing to talk about it.
- Behind every complaint, is some request, which if made and fulfilled would resolve the complaint.
- While you may not be able to satisfy their requests, it will mean a lot to them that you took the time to listen and explain why you could not do what they asked.

If you have a complaint:

1. Find someone who can do something about your complaint or who can at least listen to you and help you determine what might resolve it for you.
2. State your complaint in very specific terms.
3. Identify what would resolve your complaint and who could resolve it?
4. Ask that person to take the actions what would address your issue.
5. If you are unwilling to ask, stop voicing the complaint to others.

If you are hearing a complaint:

1. Listen to the entire complaint. Ask them, "Is there anything else?"
2. If you are not clear about any part of the complaint, ask for clarification.
3. If the complaint is in general terms, ask them to be specific.
4. Once the complaint has been clearly expressed, ask them, "Do you have a request?" or "What would resolve this for you?"
5. Then respond to their requests by either accepting, making a counter-offer or conditional response, or declining or promising to let them know on a specific date.
6. If you decline, explain your reasons and check for understanding.
7. Then ask them if the complaint has been addressed or if they need something else.
8. Thank them for voicing their complaint.

Legal Support Person

As the fight against corporate domination becomes more effective, the system becomes more aggressive in clamping down on resistance. A legal support person helps coordinate support for those arrested in his/her affinity groups or communities.

Although this handout is written with affinity groups in mind, it can also be applied to individuals who want to support their friends if they are arrested.

There are a lot of roles the legal support person can fill. Below are some examples.

Don't feel like

you're disqualified if you can't do them all. Just let your affinity group know your limits so they can plan ahead and maybe someone else can help be the legal support person with you.

Before the action:

- Arrange ahead of time, *and let ALL of your affinity group members know*, a local number that accepts collect calls from jail where you can be reached, or that you will be checking regularly and frequently.
- Know as much of people's info as they're comfortable giving - real full name, arrest history (not just
- activism related), outstanding warrants, responsibilities they need covered if arrested, emergency contacts.
- Know people's medical info: allergies, trick knees, prescription meds, and their doctor's name and phone #.
- Have access to people's IDs, bail money (or sources of bail money - friends, parents, etc.).

During the action:

- ***DON'T GET ARRESTED.***
- Remind people calling that phones may be tapped (the jail's and/or yours).
- Get (and keep track of) arrested people's booking and arrest numbers and upcoming court dates.
- If and when you hear from your friends in jail, contact the rest of your affinity group and others the arrestedfolks want informed of the situation. Update those people regularly, even if nothing's changed.
- Parents should be able to at least leave messages with the legal support person and be called back.
- Be able to arrange travel home for your arrested friends. This can mean arranging something with a friend with a car, collecting bus money...
- Be available until everyone in your affinity group is out of jail.
- Be able to get messages from the outside world to your arrested friends. This is a HUGE morale booster.
- Start a call-in or write-in campaign. Call the mayor, the police chief, and other government pawns, or write 'a letter to the editor denouncing police harassment, misconduct, unlawful arrests, and/or the oppress and silence people.

Once people start getting out of jail:

- Copy (and keep track of) everyone's paperwork from the cops (arrest reports, etc.), jail (booking info, property reports) and court (hearing dates, info on charges, etc.).
- Remind people about their upcoming court dates by calling, mailing and

emailing them.

- Have extra Police Misconduct Report forms (available at www.midnightspecial.net/materials/PMR.html) for your affinity group members to fill out at the action, or after. Police Misconduct Reports destroy the credibility of the police and thus help people's criminal defense. They also lay the groundwork for suing the cops. Get your misconduct reports to the legal team (sometimes they need to be hand delivered)

Small affinity group actions are catalysts for major social change. From ACT-UP in the 80's making AIDS care and awareness a national priority to Food Not Bombs visibly serving free food to hungry people, small actions make a big difference.

The more effective we are the more we risk arrest and other types of oppression. The legal system is designed to break us down and dehumanize us. Having a legal support person is just one more step toward resisting the criminal "justice" system, the corrupt government it props up, and the corporate rulers who use this system to oppress and silence us all.

www.midnightspecial.net

Media Skills for Direct Action

Educate Yourself on the Media and the Issues

One of the goals is to raise the consciousness of people in this country around multi-national corporations and their control of government, which has both global and local impact. The most powerful means to do this is through the media: TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines. Of course, all popular media outlets are owned and controlled by huge corporations, and so many will try to devalue and marginalize us. But through our solidarity, our actions, and our words, we can utilize these moments in history to convey a radical and inspiring message to the people.

Fundamental Tips for Interviews

Discipline your message! Use your slogan or message as much as possible.

Familiarize yourself with three soundbites (with backup information). Write them down.

Always turn the question back to your message.

Anticipate questions.

Know the opposing points.

Practice—even people who speak all the time practice.

An interview is never over even if the tape stops rolling. Everything you say to a journalist is on the record.

Don't get frustrated by difficult questions—just stick to your messages.

If you slip up, don't worry. Just ask the reporter to start again (unless it's live).

If you need more time to think, ask the reporter to repeat the question or ask a clarifying question—or simply pause and think before answering.

If you don't know an answer to a question, don't force it. Try to return to your message.

If it's an interview for print media, tell the reporter you'll track down the answer later call

them back.

Tell the reporter you have more to add if he or she overlooks something you think is important.

How to Write a Press Release

(Adapted from Salzman's "Making the News" and SPIN Project Materials)

What is a Press Release?

Informs reporters about your event, report, or issue.

More detailed than the advisory—should tell all the information a reporter needs to write their piece.

Envision, then write the press release as the news story YOU would want to see written.

Sent out the morning of or the day before the event.

Elements

Headline. This will make or break a news release—include the most important information in the headline, and make it punchy. The headline can be up to four lines if necessary, including a sub-head, if used, but keep it short (and remember to use a large font).

Important information should jump off the page—most reporters will only spend 30 seconds looking at a release.

Spend 75 percent of your time writing the headline and the first paragraph.

Use the inverted pyramid style of news writing. Make your most important points early in the release and work your way down.

Keep sentences and paragraphs short. No more than three sentences per paragraph.

Include a colorful quote from a spokesperson in the second or third paragraph.

Include a short summary of your organization in the last paragraph.

Mention "Photo Opportunity" if there is one. Be sure to send a copy of the release to the photo desk.

Structure / Form

In the top left corner, type "For Immediate Release."

Below "For Immediate Release," type the date.

Contact Information: In the top right corner, type names and phone numbers of two contacts. Make sure these contacts can be easily reached by phone. Including the contact's home phone number, if appropriate.

Type "###" at the end of your release. This is how journalists mark the end of a news copy.

Type "MORE" at the end of page 1 if your release is two pages, and put a contact phone number and short headline in the upper-right hand corner of subsequent pages.

Print your release on your organization's letterhead.

How to Distribute It

A release should be sent out the morning of, or the day before your event. In some

cases, you may want to send an “embargoed” copy to select reporters ahead of time, meaning that the information is confidential until the date you specify.

Generally, send a release to only one reporter per outlet.

If your release announces an event, send it to the “daybooks.” A daybook lists news events scheduled to take place in the region on that day. Someone from each major outlet reviews the daybooks each morning.

ALWAYS make follow up calls after you send the release. If your release is announcing an event, make the calls the morning before your event is scheduled.

Have a copy of the release ready to be faxed when you make the calls.

How to Write a Media Advisory

(Adapted from Salzman’s “Making the News” and SPIN Project Materials)

What is a Media Advisory

Functions as an FYI that alerts journalists to an upcoming event.

Gives basic information: the who, what, where, when and why.

Sent out a few days before the event.

Elements

Headline. This will make or break the advisory—include the most important information in the headline, and make it punchy. The headline can be up to four lines if necessary, including a sub-head, if used, but keep it short (and remember to use a large font – it’s eye-catching!).

Short description of the event and the issue. Make it visual (“Citizens will carry large placards and life-size puppets to the Governors Mansion to protest the latest cut in education funding.”)

List the speakers at your event.

Contact information. In the top right corner, type names and phone numbers of two contacts. Make sure these contacts can be easily reached by phone. Include the contact’s home phone number, if appropriate.

Include a short summary of your organization in the last paragraph.

Mention “Photo Opportunity” if one exists and be sure to send it to the photo editors of local news outlets as well as to reporters – they don’t always share information with each other!

Structure / Form

In the top left corner, type “Media Advisory.”

Beneath “Media Advisory,” type the date.

Type “###” at the end of your advisory. This is how journalists mark the end of copy.

Type “MORE” at the end of page 1 if your advisory is two pages, and put a contact phone number and short headline in the upper-right hand corner of subsequent pages.

Print your advisory on your organization’s letterhead. How to distribute it

A media advisory should arrive at news outlets 3 to 5 working days before the event.

Fax or mail (if time permits) your advisory to the appropriate reporter, editor or producer

at each news outlet on your press list.

If your region has a “daybook” (you can find out by calling the newsroom of your largest local newspaper) be sure to submit your advisory. A daybook lists news events scheduled to take place in the region on that day. Major news outlets review the daybooks each morning.

ALWAYS make follow up calls the day before your event, and have the advisory ready to be faxed.

Writing Opinion Pieces

(Adapted from Salzman’s “Making the News” and SPIN Project Materials)

What is an Op-Ed?

Personal opinion essays which are typically published opposite the editorial page. They help legitimize your cause and you as a knowledgeable spokesperson for it.
Elements

Write a catchy first paragraph using a personal story or concrete example.

Clearly state your specific point of view.

Aim for 700 to 750 word and double space.

Write in the active voice with two-to three-sentence paragraphs.

Avoid jargon and “wonkish” language.

Write in a personalized or storytelling way. Use humor, if possible.

Don’t respond to specific newspapers stories with an op-ed—write a letter to the editor instead.

Give the op-ed a short title.

Find a local angle for local papers, consider how the topic affects specific audiences, and write more broadly for a national paper.

Put your name, phone, and address in the top left-hand corner.

Type the number of words in the top right-hand corner.

Hints for Placing an Op-Ed

Before you send it, call and pitch the piece to the editor of the op-ed page to see if there is any interest.

Call early in the week and early in the day.

Ask about the paper’s submission policy. Some major publications want the piece to be “exclusive” (submitted only to them).

Send your op-ed to several papers at a time, if this is allowed by their policy.

Write a cover letter briefly explaining your subject, why it is relevant and will capture reader interest, and your own background. Remind the editor of your phone call.

If you don’t hear anything back from the paper a week after submitting the op-ed, call to see if it was received.

Pitching Your Story

(Adapted from Salzman’s “Making the News” and SPIN Project Materials)

Telephone calls are the most effective way to communicate with reporters. Pitch calls are essential to an effective media strategy. Reporters are on paper overload—chances are they never saw your faxed release or advisory.

Target your reporters. Contact reporters who cover your issue, and reporters you have a relationship with. If you have to make a “cold call,” ask the general assignment editor or producer who you should speak to.

Find a “hook” for your story. Show the reporter how your story is significant, dramatic, timely, controversial or impacts a lot of readers.

Always pitch the story first, and then ask if they received your release or advisory.

Immediately capture the interest of the reporter—they won’t wait for you to get to the point.

Keep the pitch short and punchy. Reporters don’t have time for long pitch calls, so get to the most interesting and important information in the first 90 seconds. Don’t forget the Who, What, Where, When, and Why.

Be enthusiastic and helpful. If you’re not excited about your story, why should the reporter be?

Never lie to a reporter. They may not like what you have to say, but they must respect you.

Be considerate of deadlines. Pitch calls are best made in the mid morning (9:30 to noon). If you sense a reporter is rushed or impatient, ask them if they are on deadline and offer to call back.

Only pitch one reporter per outlet. If you do talk to more than one person, make sure the other reporter knows that you’ve talked with someone else.

Close the deal. Ask the reporter if they are interested or if they are coming to the event. Most will not commit over the phone but they will think about it.

Offer to send information. If they don’t commit to attend your event. Offer to send them information if they cannot attend. (Remember to send the information right away.)

Don’t get frustrated. Pitch calls can be frustrating when reporters don’t bite. But remember that every phone call keeps your issue and organization on their radar screen, and is an important step in building an on-going professional relationship with reporters.

Holding a Media Event

(Adapted from Salzman’s “Making the News” and SPIN Project Materials)

What is a Media Event:

An activity intended to generate news coverage. They often involve gimmicky visuals, playful stunts, props, etc.

Hints

Determine if your event is newsworthy. The more of the following characteristics it has, the more likely it will get coverage:

Novelty
Conflict
New data, symbol of a trend
Simplicity
Humor
Prominent figure involved
Action
Bright props and images
Local impact
Holidays, anniversaries.

- Build your media event—site, speakers, visuals—around your message and slogan.
- Make it fun. If you don't look like you want to be there, why should the press?
- Don't be afraid to employ stunts. Sexy and trendy events take precedence over long range things with the media.
- Consider timing. Is your event competing with other things? It is best to stage an event Monday through Thursday, 10 A.M. though 2 P.M.
- Find an effective location. Consider the following questions when choosing a location:

Is the site convenient? Reporters are busy and won't travel far for an event.

Is your site too commonly used for media events? Try to find a unique location, if possible.

If your event is outdoors, do you have a backup location? A little rain or bad weather won't ruin an event, but severe conditions will. Also consider if it is possible to postpone it if the weather is very bad.

Do you need a permit? Check with the local police department.

Arrange to have photographers take pictures of your event.

Display a large banner or sign with your organization's logo.

The event should last 15 to 45 minutes.

Distribute information about your issue and organization at the event.

Remember equipment. Will you need a megaphone, podium, or portable microphone?

Have spokespersons ready to be interviewed.

Find out which reporters attended the event. Follow up with the no-shows.

How to Host a Press Conference

What is a Press Conference?

Scheduled to release new information about an issue, announce a further event, or respond to breaking news.

Elements / Hints

Determine if a press conference is appropriate. Press conferences seldom get much coverage from media—it is usually better to stage a media event, or call reporters and fax them information.

Hold the conference outside, if possible. Make sure to have an indoor backup for bad weather.

Choose a space that fits your audience. Don't have room for 50 if you are only expecting 8. It will appear as though the public is not interested in your issue. Have supporters fill empty seats. Make the event look well attended for the reporters and TV cameras.

Be sure the room is adequately equipped for the media. Make sure there are electrical outlets, enough room in the back for cameras and tripods, etc.

Practice the press conference in advance, including questions.

Place your group's logo in front of the podium.

Assign someone to greet reporters, distribute a press kit and to ask reporters to sign in. No more than four speakers, with each talking a maximum of five minutes. Put your most important speakers on first.

Create props for your speakers to hold, especially if they are the only visual element of event. Speakers could gesture toward large charts and diagrams.

Speakers should dress in formal clothes unless they are in costumes or their clothes are somehow related to the message they are trying to send.

If only a few reporters arrive on time, delay for five minutes to see if more show up. But if you have a large group, get started on time.

Allow ten minutes for questions.

The press conference should not last longer than half an hour. Reporters can ask individuals questions after the event if they want more information.

If possible, provide refreshments.

Tips for Print Media Interviews

Newspaper reporters, who often cover "beats" (issue areas), are more likely to engage in a detailed discussion of your issue than broadcast journalists.

Don't be afraid to fully explain your position, but be sure to emphasize your key points—those are the quotes you want to appear in the paper.

Don't ignore questions. Newspaper reporters usually want more precise answers to their questions than do TV interviewers.

Only ask a reporter to read back a quote of yours if it's absolutely necessary. Reserve this for extremely critical quotes.

Tips for Radio Interviews

Also see "Tips for Television Interviews." Most of the same tips apply.

(Adapted from Salzman's "Making the News" and SPIN Project Materials)

Be prepared. Rehearse your message before the interview. You can use notes, but don't read.

Warm up your voice by talking for a few minutes before.

Don't speak toooooo sloooooowly, but do speak clearly.

Practice. Have a friend ask you questions and tape your responses.

Most radio interviews are conducted by phone. Be sure to be in a quiet location for the call.

Don't answer questions with a simple yes or no. Explain your position and have an exchange with the host.

Repeat your message. Listeners may tune in late, and miss your message.

Vary your voice, but avoid "ah" and "um."

Try to sound as if you are speaking to a friend.

Use humor, personal stories and concrete messages.

Be brief.

Have supporters call in while you're on the show.

Have someone tape the show so you can listen to it later.

Tips for Television Interviews

Determine the format. Is the show going to be taped and edited, or live?

Every "blink," "uh," and "twitch" is magnified on camera.

Look at the reporter or the camera operator. Don't look into the camera unless you are talking from the field with an anchor back at the studio.

Keep your answers brief and stick to your key points. The more tape they have, the less control you have over what gets on the air.

In taped interviews try to remember to incorporate the question into your answer in a complete sentence. For example, if an interviewer asks, "What are some ways in which the World Bank harms the environment?" don't simply answer "By financing polluting industries and forcing poor nations to cut back on environmental protections." The reason for this is that often producers will edit tape to use a particular response, or "sound bite" elsewhere in the story. If you don't answer in a complete sentence, your answer may turn out to be incomprehensible when used elsewhere. You will make a fast friend of the producer by answering in a way that can be used as a stand-alone soundbite anywhere in the story. For example, "The World Bank harms the environment by financing polluting projects, and also by forcing poor governments to cut back on their environmental protections."

If you make a mistake, stop and start over (unless it's live).

Interpret questions broadly, or, if necessary, ignore them and say what you want. This especially applies in TV interviews where may reporters will only take a sound bite and then move on.

Give personal and moving examples. Refer to concrete images.

Unexpected Media Calls

(Adapted from Salzman's "Making the News" and SPIN Project Materials)

You're doing your job! They know who you are and are coming to you as an expert. · If you are not sure how to respond, simply jot down the question and assure the reporter that you will return the call as soon as possible.

Get the details. Be sure of what the reporter needs. Do they want a quote or

background information?

Verify the reporter's deadline. Be sure to get back to the reporter before that time. Don't ignore the media. Neglected reporters have a long memory. Try to answer the reporter's questions as quickly and completely as possible. Nothing is ever off the record. Don't say things you wouldn't want to see in print.

BEING SUPPORT

For actions and demonstrations, it is important to prepare ourselves to be in support roles. For direct action and civil disobedience, support people are crucial to those risking arrest. In actions where no one is planning on risking arrest, support roles are also important to think out in advance, both for taking on necessary tasks during legal actions, and to prepare for the contingency of unexpected arrests.

Whether you are organized into an affinity group, action squad, bloc, or just a busload of people from the same town, certain people should commit to staying out of the center of action so as to support others taking more risk.

Support roles for demonstrations include:

- s **Scouts:** scope out other areas, rumors, and situations and report information back to the group.
- s **Tactical team:** a couple of trusted group members who can think quickly in the face of changing scenarios and make recommendations for group to act.
- s **Communications:** someone with 2-way radio, cell phone, &/or bike that can communicate with other groups within action and help coordinate.
- s **Medics:** have first aid kit and know how to use it.
- s **Legal observers:** will pay close attention to details useful for legal defense later.
- s **De-escalators:** people good at defusing problems with police or others.

Arrest support people should:

BEFORE AN ACTION

- s Know everyone in the group by name, description, and if used, by alias.
- s Have written down pertinent information for each member on needs in case of arrest: medical needs, phone number, who to contact & when, and any other home support needs such as pet care.
- s Have all this information, ID's if group intends to practice jail solidarity, keys, money, and other belongings stored at a remote location from the action.
- s Know where arrestees are likely to be taken and have transportation to get there.
- s Know the phone numbers for legal, medics, media, and action support.

DURING AN ACTION

- s Give any emergency information about yourself to another support person
- s Meet and recheck plans and needs with group
- s Give your contact & back-up information to each group member.
- s Have pens and paper to take legal observation notes
- s Once the first person in your group is arrested, one support person should follow them, and another support person should stay near group until all are arrested.
- s Once all have been arrested or are out of risk, call legal and give information.

AFTER ARRESTS

- s Go to processing facilities and attempt to find out if your people are all there.
- s Be visible to police so they know the arrestees are not alone.
- s Try to find out what the charges are.
- s Make calls you have been asked to make in the case of arrest.
- s Try to find out emotional and physical states of those inside, whether they are non-cooperating and to what extent, if they want a lawyer, and liase with legal team.
- s Help hold vigil outside of jail until all are released. Have food for self and those released available.
- s Attend court proceedings and keep track of all that happens.
- s Coordinate rides for those released

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a group of people who have an affinity for each other, know each others strengths and weaknesses, support each other, and do (or intend to do) political/campaign work together. Most of us will have had some childhood/formative experience of being part of a group whether informally, as in a group of kids that are the same age and live in the same street, suburb or town, or formally, as in being involved in a sports team. However, affinity groups differ from these for numerous reasons, as explained below, (hierarchy, trust, responsibility to each other etc). The concept of 'affinity groups has a long history. They developed as an organising structure during the Spanish Civil war and have been used with amazing success over the last thirty years of feminist, anti-nuclear, environmental and social justice movements around the world. They were first used as a structure for a large scale nonviolent blockade during the 30,000 strong occupation of the Ruhr nuclear power station in Germany in 1969, and then in the United States occupations / blockades of the Seabrook nuclear power station in '71 when 10,000 were arrested and again many times in the highly successful US anti-nuclear movement during the '70's and '80's. Their use in sustaining activists

through high levels of police repression has been borne out time and again. More recently, they have been used constructively in the mass protest actions in Seattle and Washington. We don't have to use the word 'affinity group' - blockade teams, action groups, cells, action collectives etc. have all been used to describe the same concept. It would be best to find the most relevant name depending on when and where the structure is used. Also, each affinity group can choose their own name. For example, at the AIDEX protest, there was a 'Perseverance Affinity Group' named after the Fitzroy pub where it's members had their first meeting. Other names range across a whole gamut of political sensibilities (or the lack thereof); from the "Screaming Trees", the "Alcoholics against the Bomb", to the "Buckrabendinni Action Tribe"

With whom do i form an an affinity group?

The simple answer to this is the people that you know, and that feel the same way about the issue(s) in question. They could be people you see in a tutorial, work with, go out with, or live with. The point to stress however, is that you have something in common other than the issue that is bringing you all together, and that you trust them and they trust you. An important aspect to being part of an affinity group is to get to know where each other is at regarding the campaign or issue. This can involve having a meal together, and you all discussing it after you have eaten, or doing some form of activist related training together, like attending a nonviolence, conflict resolution or facilitation workshop, developing de-arresting strategies if needed, working out how to deal with certain police tactics ie. snatch squads, police horses. You should all have a shared idea of what you want individually & collectively from the action/campaign, how it will conceivably go, what support you will need from others, and what you can offer others. It helps if you have agreement on certain basic things: how active, how spiritual, how nonviolent, how touchy-feely, how spiky, how willing to risk arrest, when you'll bail-out, your overall political perspective etc. But then again, you may all just work together at a job, play music or hike together etc.

Organisation

Within an affinity group, there are a whole range of different roles that it's members can perform. A lot of these roles will be determined by the aim or raison detre of the AG, but could include a Media Spokesperson, to either talk to / deal with news media , a Quick decision facilitator, 1st Aid to take care of people that are hurt, a Spokesperson to convey the affinity group's ideas and decisions to other AG's, a Legal Observer, and Arrest support.

As well as these roles within itself the AG can take on a specialised role in the way it interacts with other AGs, or operates within the breadth of the protest or campaign. There can be affinity groups specialising in copwatching, countering "protest highjackers", legal observation, catering, communication & cluster liaison, medical., clowning, or good old common garden variety blockading. With this role focus, each AG can do it's job and support the work of other affinity groups. In this way, many affinity groups form an interdependent network that achieves so much more than a large group of individual activists.

Within the context of a demonstration, as important as the aspect of the AG that is out on the street, is the support crew. They do all the mundane stuff, and regrettably don't get the recognition that they deserve. They can walk/feed pets, water plants, childcare, call employers and freaked out parents/children, pay rent etc. As a consequence, more people can participate (and risk more) because they have help with these things. The emotional support is not to be underestimated; apart from the offers of hugs, kisses, and phone calls, people feel safe enough to risk themselves when they know that they have emotional support. Support crew can also indirectly support direct action by supplying information to news media and interested community groups, raising funds and providing logistical support, like food, water and accommodation. The street aspect of an AG, and its support crew can (and should) swap round, so that there is a clear understanding within it as to the importance of all roles in the group's effectiveness. The aim at the end of the day is to look after yourself and each other, have fun, and work towards a maximized degree of constructive social change

Coming Out of Jail Stronger

By Starhawk

In the many times I've been to jail, here are some of the overwhelming responses I've noticed in myself and which you might be experiencing:

Rage: Jail is simply the distilled form of the larger violence around us. Anger is a sane and healthy response, but you may find it deflected onto your friends and families instead of directed to the systems of oppression we're fighting. Warn your friends and coworkers to tread gently and not order you around for a while. Be prepared for flashes of rage, and try to remember whom we're really angry at.

Self-Blame—You've been in a system designed on every level to make you feel bad, wrong, inadequate and powerless. The men and women who run it are experts in psychological manipulation and intimidation. They spend a lifetime developing their techniques—you had at most a few hours training in how to resist them.

When you're in jail, you're constantly faced with decisions to be made with inadequate information under conditions of fear and exhaustion. You may make mistakes. You may end up complying when you later wish you'd resisted, or failing to act when you think you should have. You may make decisions you later regret.

Try not to blame yourselves. One of the ways the system functions is to keep us focused on what we, individually, did or didn't do instead of on the violence of the system itself. Self blame is the way we take the violence of the system in, and beat ourselves up instead of making the guards and police do their own dirty work. And it rapidly turns into blame of each other, becoming a force to divide us and cut us off from the very support we need.

Difficult Re-entry: It's hard to go back to regular life after the intensity of an action. It's hard to go home to a lonely apartment after the strong community we've felt in the action and in jail. It's hard to go back to a school, a job, or to any institution that

suddenly seems like a softer-edged version of the jail. And everything suddenly does look like a version of jail—a system of punishment and control.

You may find yourselves tired, depressed, unable to take pleasure in things you usually enjoy, vicariously experiencing the sufferings of all the oppressed and dispossessed. Food may seem tasteless, work or studies meaningless. You may lose things, get confused, and have difficulty functioning.

These are common human responses to loss, trauma and stress. They are not a sign of your personal weakness or inadequacy. Here are a few things that can help:

Talk About It: Ideally with the others who were with you, with your affinity group or with someone else who has been through a similar experience. If that's not possible, find a friend who is willing to lend a sympathetic ear, or a counselor. You need to tell your story, sometimes over and over and over again.

Rest: We've all put out a phenomenal amount of energy. Sleep. Take yourself out into a natural environment with trees and green plants. Lie on the ground. Restore your energy.

Cleanse: Do something physical and symbolic to release the energies of the jail. Take a shower and scrub with epsom salts, bathe in the ocean or a running stream, wash your clothes. Do it with the conscious intention of letting go of the jail energy, of emerging renewed.

Renew: If you have a spiritual practice, now is the time to intensify it. If you don't resonate with spirituality, take time for what does inspire you and feed you, whether it's the forests, music, or the company of friends.

Learn: You've just received a priceless educational experience. You now know more about the underlying workings of the system we are fighting. You've had a small taste of the violence and repression experienced every day by the poor, by people of color, by those who end up in jail without the support of an action and a media team. You will never be the same person you were before this action.

Honor yourself: And all of us—for the courage, strength, and commitment we've shown in taking action, for the movement we are building together, for the ways we've listened to one another and struggled with our differences and already changed the world. I'm deeply, deeply proud to have been part of this action, and to be in a movement that contains such brave, committed and caring people.

Carry it On: Rage can be an energizing force. So can love. As hard as a jail experience can be, it can also be empowering. We can come out of it stronger than we went in. What we've learned from this action can move us into the next phase as we build the movement that will transform the world.

Responding to Trauma

in Protests and Mass Mobilizations

Supporting Yourself and Others to Cope with Traumatic Incidents

This is a list of suggestions prepared by someone who has conventional qualifications and significant experience in working with trauma and traumatic incidents ... but it is no definitive authority on what you should and shouldn't do ... use it as food for thought to mix with your own experience and compassion. They are just things that I find helpful.

Traumatic incidents DO happen at protests and mass mobilizations ...

- ~ use of terror tactics (sometimes indiscriminately) by police, including physical, mental and sexual assault
- ~ the experience of prolonged and intense fear
- ~ being separated from injured colleagues
- ~ sexual harassment by other protestors

For inexperienced protestors, traumatic incidents can shatter an illusion of invulnerability, and expose on a very personal level the injustice and violence of loving, compassionate people being treated as terrorists. For those more used to the front lines, these incidents can build up through time causing escalating uneasiness and burnout.

This doesn't mean that we should frighten people away from mass mobilizations, however, as most of the time we cope well with the difficult circumstances that confront us. It is often in the midst of fighting for what our heart burns for that we discover our resources of resilience and courage.

Yet we can lessen the risk of trauma among ourselves and others ... by taking responsibility to be mindful of the effects of traumatic incidents, we are evolving the revolution now into a world of decentralized networks of care, compassion and solidarity.

Trauma is not an inevitable reaction at critical incidents ... certain incidents like those listed above certainly increase the likelihood of trauma, and almost always guarantees at least some level of distress, but don't assume that people will be strongly traumatized. Be very mindful of the possibility of trauma, yes, but don't assume it.

If someone is showing signs of trauma – whether it be one hour or one month after a traumatic incident – **take it seriously**. Post-traumatic stress can be severely worsened by ignoring it, treating it as if it doesn't matter, joking about it, etc ... traumatic stress can make one feel very isolated and alone, and glib reactions (of the “you'll get over it” sort) to this experience can intensify this experience. Healing from a trauma is partly about finding safe ways to reconnect a range of things that have been severed by the trauma (trust, faith, etc), and this is not done by ignoring or minimizing it.

In the **immediate aftermath of a traumatic incident**, if someone is appearing affected ask them if they'd like to go to a quieter space away from where all the noise and trauma is happening ... but don't yank them away if they wish to remain connected to what is happening. Help them to reconnect with others in their affinity group, and to locate those they are concerned about. Supporting people to reconnect with

their affinity groups is a very nurturing thing to do in these situations ... but if this can't happen for whatever reason, providing supportive contact in the immediate aftermath can be so helpful. There is no need to dissect everything that happened at this stage ... be attuned to the energy of the person you're supporting, and ask them what would help them to feel less distressed ~ you don't need to baby the person, but rather support them to take their own measures to feel back in control of things.

Be mindful of whether the person is in **some level of shock**, or even in a milder form of daze. In this situation they may not realize how close they are to police batons, nor be aware of other dangers that are around them. This doesn't mean that you have to make decisions for them ... just be watchful so that you are supporting them to feel more in control in a safe way, that doesn't worsen the situation for them.

Also note that sometimes the full extent of one's injuries is not apparent in the aftermath of a traumatic incident ... look out for signs of internal damage that may be overshadowed by the person's adrenalin or shock

Be mindful of little things that you can do to assist the person to **restore a sense of dignity and humanity** ... finding a space where they can have a wash, feeling the grass underneath their feet ~ ask them what will help (as this will differ between people and circumstances).

It goes without saying how important **deep listening** is. There's no problem in gently reassuring that we generally do recover from trauma through time ... that the reactions do often subside. It is particularly important to reassure the person that what they are feeling is normal ... that traumatic reactions are normal reactions to the types of events that no-one should have to be exposed to, that it isn't a sign of going mad, nor of being unable to 'stand up for the cause.' Be very wary of "don't be a cry-baby" type of reactions that come out of the same sense of patriarchy found in police cultures and in much of society.

Be cautious when offering your own experience in similar situations. By all means, talk about your experiences in general terms to reassure the person that with support they will feel less distressed through time ... this may also help them to feel less alone. But don't assume that your specific reactions to your experience can speak for what the person besides you is experiencing now, nor that what worked for you will necessarily work for them.

And in the **days after the traumatic incidents?** ... some things to remember include

- v Eating nourishing food
- v Being physically active, as traumatic incidents can wash one's body with chemicals that need releasing through exercise
- v Helping the person to establish a normal routine for themselves, to do at least some of the sorts of things that they would do had they have not been traumatized
- v Continuing to provide a listening ear
- v Helping the person to find their own balance of reconnecting with various facets of the mobilization, spending time in a small supportive group (s), and being alone if they express this wish
- v The person may not be their normal self ... be patient, and don't try to snap the person back into their normal self

For particularly severe traumatic incidents, it can be helpful to organize a formal group debrief for those affected, at some point between 24 and 72 hours after the incident. A formal debrief is run by someone with experience who can help those involved in a particular incident to support each other.

POLICE MISCONDUCT REPORT

§ **If you don't know the answers** to some of the following questions, **leave the box blank.** It's okay if you didn't see every single thing.

§ **Don't guess!** Even one false answer can ruin your whole report, because people assume that if one answer is wrong, then none of your answers are trustworthy.

§ If a question concerns **locations or distance**, **go back to the scene and check.**

ABOUT YOU	
Today's date:	
Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone numbers:	

ABOUT THE INCIDENT	
Date of incident:	
Time incident began:	Time incident ended:
Exact location of incident:	

ABOUT MEDIA WITNESSES
If there were reporters, photographers or videographers present, give names, descriptions, phone numbers, emails, and media organization.

ABOUT OTHER WITNESSES
Description, name, address, email and phone numbers:

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If the incident involved more than one police officer or victim, use additional copies of this page. For example, if there were two officers, you would need one extra copy of this page. If there are more than one victim or officer, and you don't know their names, call them victim-1, victim-2, victim-3, or officer-1, officer-2, officer-3, etc.

ABOUT THE VICTIM	
Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone numbers:	
Gender:	Age:
Race:	Complexion:
Height:	Weight:
Hair (color, type, style):	Facial hair:
Glasses:	Voice (high/low, accent):
Marks, scars, tattoos:	Disabilities:
Clothing:	

ABOUT THE OFFICER	
Name:	
Organization:	
Badge number:	Rank:
Gender:	Age:
Race:	Complexion:
Height:	Weight:
Hair (color, type, style):	Facial hair:
Glasses:	Voice (high/low, accent):
Clothing/uniform, weapons:	
Vehicle (make, markings, license):	

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