

Direct Action Handbook

Models for Living Revolution and Overgrowing the State!

Produced by the Root Activist Network of Trainers

Credits: Much of this material has been passed on through the ages being updated, adapted and tweaked for different actions. In many cases the original authors may never be known, but sources we do know of include Starhawk's original writings, Katya Komusarik, Midnight Special Law Collective, Black Cross Medical Collective, Tools for White Guys, N30 RNC Action Packet,

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Welcome to Community

Welcome to a community committed to living the values we stand for. In this manual, you will learn how we attempt to put true democracy into practice, through the ways we organize, make decisions, and take care of each other. You will also find much information that can help you decide what form of action is right for you, and how to stay as safe as possible while confronting oppressive power.

In taking a stand in New York this summer against the policies of the Bush administration and the Republican party, you take your place in a long line of struggles against tyranny that extends back through history to the first slave revolt and the earliest peasant uprising, and includes the revolution that founded this country.

Democracy in the U.S. has always been an imperfect experiment, leaving out many, conducted on stolen land. Every disenfranchised group has had to wage a struggle for its rights, to expand the definition of democracy so that it includes the right of all people to have a say in the decisions that affect them.

The U.S. has never lived up to its ideals—but they are ideals worth fighting for: liberty and justice for all. Not for some but not others, not for a privileged few, not for us but not them—but for ALL.

Today we stand at a crossroads. Will we continue to struggle for those ideals? Or will we abandon them entirely and accept the cynicism of power holders that put themselves above the law, that lie and deceive, wage aggressive war on the world, and establish themselves as rulers of a global empire?

Democracy is not a spectator sport. It requires participation, effort, commitment, and risk. Democracy is not just pushing a button every four years, it's how we live our lives and shape our future every day.

Actions in New York will not be easy. We anticipate a huge police presence, and many attempts to intimidate us. But with organization, preparation and solidarity, we can support each other to face our fears and take actions that can shape the world. And what a joyful privilege—to be numbered in the ranks of all those who have fought for justice throughout history, to join in a community of the courageous to create the free and loving world we

want to see.

Why Nonviolent Direct Action?

There will be many forms of resistance in New York: rallies, speeches, educational events, legal, permitted marches. All are important. But one of the most potent forms of resistance is nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience.

Direct action is action that directly confronts oppressive power, that seeks to interfere with its operations and to pose an alternative. A strike, a blockade, a boycott, a sit-in may all be forms of direct action. When we take direct action, we may engage in civil disobedience: the principled refusal to obey an unjust law or abide by rules and procedures that support an unjust system.

Marches, rallies and speeches are important ways to show our opposition to Bush and his policies. But we feel that stronger action is needed, to actively withdraw our consent from the lies, the aggression, the policies of pre-emptive war, the culture of repression and torture promoted by Bush and his advisors.

Why direct action? Because it works! Direct action has been an essential part of every successful social change movement in U.S. history – the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, labor rights, civil rights, the struggles against nuclear power and weapons, environmental protection, queer issues, AIDS advocacy, Central American solidarity, the peace movement and more.

When the established channels fail to respond to our needs, when marches and speeches are ignored, when those who hold power abuse it and refuse to be curbed by ordinary means of protest, we take actions that intervene directly, interfering with their functions, raising the social and political costs of continuing with their policies, showing the depth of our opposition and forcing the issues into the public agenda.

Why nonviolence?

Because we stand for the values of life, compassion, love, and respect for other human beings, and we want to demonstrate those values in our actions. Some of us may be committed to nonviolence as a way of life; others may see it as a strategy of value at this moment. Many of us support a diversity of tactics in political struggle, but believe that a nonviolent action will make the clearest, most powerful statement at this moment.

Violence is the core of Bush's policies and his immediate response to every problem. We want no part of aggressive wars, pre-emptive strikes, the legitimization of torture and endless incarceration, the abrogation of human rights and the assault on civil liberties that the Bush administration stands for. Violence is also inherent in Bush's policies of economic injustice, and in the structural violence of poverty, racism, sexism, lack of access to health care and education, the abrogation of human rights and the denigration of the environment.

We stand for something different: a vision of a country that cares for its people, its land and its environment, that values the full development of each individual, that seeks to resolve conflicts through diplomacy and negotiation, that assures a fair share to all of the sustainable abundance created by our labor and resources, that treasures liberty and nurtures community. Nonviolent actions embody the world we want to create. We can take the streets with art, music, puppets, poetry, dance, drums, food, and gardens, and spontaneous eruptions of joy.

Through NVDA we can:

- Interfere with the operations of injustice
- Point a spotlight on the lack of democracy and accountability in the United States.
- Expose the myth that the American people support Bush's policies.
- Delegitimize the policies of the Bush administration by demonstrating enormous, committed opposition.
- Empower people to take responsibility for creating their future.
- Build a community that supports us in taking risks as agents of change.
- Embody alternatives and demonstrate the values we seek in our daily lives. Values of cooperation, direct democracy, inclusiveness and diversity, environmental sustainability, creativity, self-worth, freedom, passion, interconnectedness, solidarity and radical imagination.

Understanding Power: Historical and Theroretical Overview of Nonviolent Social Change

The forces of Empire need us to cooperate and go along. They need a homogenized, fearful, timid, unquestioning and ever-consuming populace! The media and corporation re-enforce this by dumbing down the information provided and brainwashing us into buying, buying, buying things we do not need. We are literally beaten into submission with a pen, afraid of what will happen if we don't go along. What follows are some basic principles that underlay power dynamics in our everyday life.

1. All those who govern derive their power from the consent of the governed Obedience is at the heart of political power. This is true whether the government is a dictatorship or a form of democracy. Those in power depend upon the submission or consent of the citizenry, which can be achieved through terror, subtle forms of manipulation, or agreement.

2. People can withdraw their consent. Obedience is not inevitable. History is filled with examples of people organizing to challenge the existing law and government, committing acts of civil disobedience for the sake of justice and the higher moral good. When we choose to withdraw our consent there is a consequence. If we are prepared to assume the consequences of our actions, there is nothing they can do to stop us. It is in making this choice that we claim our power and begin the process of social change.

3. It is not punishment that keeps people obedient but fear of punishment. Intimidation is often the first line of defense for those in power. Intimidation works to the extent that it invokes fear in the populace. Resistance to unjust law and authority depends upon overcoming-personal fears. The non-violent resister is more concerned about what will happen to the oppressed if the unjust situation continues than what will happen to her/him in the process of changing it. Thus, the non-violent resister becomes engaged in changing history by overcoming fear, apathy and neutrality. (Even Nazi Germany, ruled with Gestapo forces in the streets, did not intimidate the wives of approximately 600 men who were arrested in one of the last round ups of Jews. The women refused to just remain in their homes and wait. They went to the square in front of where the men were being jailed. They protested and waved to the men calling upon the Gestapo to free them. Machine gun fire could have killed every protester in the square. They persisted and the Nazis released the

men. This example is not to say that Hitler could have been overthrown by totally non-violent actions.) It does point, though, to the importance of refusing to allow our fears to immobilize us in the face of greater physical power.

4. Humanity has only progressed through conflict and struggle. Most of the civil rights we enjoy today were not handed down by the founders of our country but were fought for and won through acts of protest and resistance. The eight-hour day, minimum wage, the right to organize and bargain collectively, worker's compensation, civil rights for blacks, voting rights for women were all won in the streets long before Congress enacted them into law. Frederick Douglas said, "The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of struggle. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are those who want crops without plowing up the ground. The struggle may be a physical one or a moral one or both, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

There are many demands on our life — family, work, personal needs. What claims our life at its deepest level will determine who or what we obey and to whom or what we will ultimately pay allegiance. Moral claims may take a variety of forms — a commitment to justice, the common good, a healthy productive life, god/spirit. How clear we are about those ideals and how we integrate them into our lives will determine what form our resistance will take.

SO, WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT TODAY REGARDING POLICE TACTICS AND INFORMATION

In the aftermath of the 2003 FTAA Ministerial, in which Miami Mayor Diaz called his city's para-military assault on free speech "a model for homeland security," many journalists and activists have come to use the "Miami Model" as shorthand for an emerging set of "enhanced" law enforcement strategies aimed at preventing or denying public assembly, marginalizing dissenting voices, and insuring that high-profile government and corporate meetings take place without a hitch. The culmination of 20 years of militarizing domestic law enforcement values, ideals and technology, the Model is promoted by the highest levels of the Federal government and made possible by the Homeland Security Act, the USA PATRIOT Act, as well as other Federal legislation and executive orders.

If we organize in advance we can counter some of these steps below:

How to Suppress Political Dissent in 10 Easy Steps www.saveourcivilliberties.org

1. Establish a Unified Command and Control Center to coordinate the efforts of dozens of law enforcement agencies.
2. Pass repressive ordinances to constrain public assembly and the types of materials activists can bring to demonstrations.
3. Collaborate with the corporate media to produce a disinformation campaign about "violent anarchists coming to town" and how "brave, well trained officers" will keep the peace.
4. Organize public training drills to show overwhelming military power, drive police cars or military vehicles through neighborhoods
5. Harass, intimidate, and conduct surveillance of activists. Infiltrate and disrupt meetings, send undercover agents into actions and media centers.
6. Reserve public spaces and scare local residents so that activists can't find housing or

meeting spaces.

7. Delay issuing permits until the very last minute.

8. Surround protesters with thousands of riot cops armed with the latest high-tech weaponry.

9. Arrest protestors and deprive them of food, water and medical attention.

10. **NEW!** Declare a state of emergency. Call in the National Guard and other Armed Forces.

Political Self Defense needs to begin long before hitting the streets, we must seek to tighten a web of restraint around the police and make it difficult for them to get away with the “You Can Beat the Rap, But Not the Ride” mentality

••••••• Community Organizing, Outreach and Education are critical! This helps the public understand who we are, why we are protesting and what we want. This can counter the dehumanization of us by the media

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

••••••• Demand that the Police and Public Official make public agreements to respect our rights

••••••• Holding public officials accountable for past acts of violence, unjust ordinances.

••••••• Organize Press Events to counter the media lies

••••••• Plan for group solidarity and strategize how to protect those at greatest risk.

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

GETTING ORGANIZED

Street Organization!

There are many ways to organize and stay connected in the streets. At minimum have a buddy and if possible get hooked into a larger group

••••••• Buddies – one other person that you stay connected at the hip with. Make sure it is someone you trust and you can rely on.

••••••• Action Teams – are often organized for an independent, secret small group action that is not always connected to a mass action. Action teams are often used for banner hangs on buildings. An action team is essentially an affinity group

••••••• Affinity Groups – are made up of 5-20 people who work collectively, autonomously and are self-sufficient in an action. (more information later)

••••••• Clusters – a collection of affinity groups who agree to work together on a common project, action, blockade.

••••••• Blocs – are similar to clusters in that they are formed for specific actions, they may be made up of individuals or groups and have agreed to a common set of tactics

••••••• Flying Squads – come out of the labor movement and are mobile groups of individuals who can quickly mobilize and disrupt or challenge the boss, corporations and the oppression that capitalism mobilizes. They typically have pre-determined tactical leadership that will help direct the group.

•••••• Living River – a model used by the Pagan Cluster is organized based on risk. It is a fluid, flexible model that allows people to shift and choose. Using flags to designate different levels of risk. In the midst of action we have “green” group will attempt to get out if it gets hot. Then we have a group that will go for it and another that will stay near to hold space.

•••••• Street Spokescouncils can be a quick way to make decisions in the streets. Each group sends a spokes. Options are quickly identified for a decision to be quickly reached.

Affinity Groups

Affinity groups are self-reliant groups of 5 to 20 people who are the basic planning and decision-making bodies for an action. Affinity groups may consist of people who are friends, coworkers, from the same neighborhood, city, workplace or school, or people who have a common identity or interest. Some AG's exist only for one action and other have stayed together for years. Each affinity group that includes people risking arrest should include people who will support those arrested before, during and after the action. Affinity groups should also try to have some people trained in first aid, legal observing, scouting and radio communications.

Affinity groups support horizontal organizing and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see, each has complete freedom and decision-making power regarding their action. Affinity groups by nature are decentralized and non-hierarchical, two important principles of anarchist organizing and action.

Affinity groups also serve as a source of support for the members and reinforce a sense of solidarity. They provide a solution to the isolation or separation that can come to individuals acting alone. By including all participants in a circle of familiarity and acquaintance, the affinity group structure reduces the possibility of infiltration by outside agents or provocateurs. If a new person asks to join an affinity group, s/he should find out what the group believes in and what they plan to do, and decide if s/he can share in it.

In large actions, affinity groups usually send "spokespersons" to a "spokescouncil" meeting, to communicate and coordinate the different groups' decisions and then bring the coordinated information or proposal back to their respective groups for their final discussion and approval.

Roles or skills we need in our affinity groups to be successful and self-reliant:

- Facilitators – particularly for quick decision-making moments!
- Spokes People
- **Scouts:** scope out other areas, rumors, and situations and report information back to the group.
- **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.
- **Communications:** someone with 2-way radio, cell phone, &/or bike that can communicate with other groups within action and help coordinate.
- **Medics:** have first aid kit and know how to use it.
- **Legal observers:** will pay close attention to details useful for legal defense later.

- **De-escalators:** people good at defusing problems with police or others.
- **Media Spokes**

Cluster Groups of affinity groups working together are sometimes called "clusters." A large action can have several large "clusters" all working together.

Spokes Councils

A spokescouncil is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate mass action, jail/court solidarity, and other actions. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics.

Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokescouncil meeting to decide on important issues for the action. At the meeting affinity group spokespeople will sit in a circle with their affinity groups and everyone else sitting behind them in an outer circle. Discussion and decisions making is limited to affinity group spokespeople. Spokespeople are responsible for carrying their group's plans, opinions and decisions to the spokescouncil and relaying information and decisions back to their group. A spokescouncil does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make their own decisions about what they want to do on the streets (as long as it fits in with any action guidelines.) All decisions in spokescouncils are made by consensus, so that all affinity groups have agreed and are committed to the mass direct action

Consensus – a great form of Direct Democracy!

Consensus is a decision-making process that is an inclusive and participatory. It seeks to address the concerns and needs of an entire group and synthesize these into the best possible solution. It is a non-coercive, egalitarian mode of decision-making. All are empowered to participate in the decisions that affect them. As we use consensus, we are deconstructing hierarchy and authority in our daily lives and interactions, and actively seeking to replace them with relationships of trust, equity, support, and strength. By using consensus, we engage in a co-operative approach to decision-making, and seek to build sustainable and mutually satisfying decisions through discussion, creativity, and compromise

There are certain roles as well as hand signals that help the process work. Roles should be carried out by everyone as needed — not just the person specially designated. These are followed by some of the many ways to conduct a meeting using the consensus process.

Roles

- Facilitator – helps keep focus, flow, energy moving toward meeting goals
- Time Keeper – monitors time and gives people heads up a few minutes before time is up
- Vibes Watcher – pays attention to energy, dragging, conflict, and suggests things to shift dynamics

- Note Taker – what do people want out of notes, writes down key decisions plus..
- Scribe – writes up information on “butcher” paper so whole group can see
- Door Keeper – welcomes late comers and fills them in on agenda and what’s happened so far

Hand Signals

- Process Point - Like a P – means you can jump stack of speakers to rectify process
- Technical – like a T – means you have key information that is needed or will help.
- Agree – silent clap
- Move on – use sparingly –two hands in front moving in circles around each other, means hurry up or you’re taking too much time!
- Can’t hear – Hand Cupped behind ear
- Over My Head – Hands moving over head – do not understand what is happening or what is being talked about

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

Tools for Stress-Reduction

- Take some deep breaths
- Stretch breaks/cooperative games
- Shift energy by: singing, humor, silence
- Feelings sharing
- Making LOUD noises
- Back rubs
- Fears in the hat
- Appreciations/affirmations
- Active listening
- Restating other's viewpoint / modeling opposite views
- Support groups / Caucuses
- Venting emotions somewhere else

Hints for De-Escalating a Conflict:

- Take a deep breath to stay relaxed.
- Make eye contact
- Speak softly, slowly and with a calm voice
- 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.
- Active listening....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.

Constructive critique is specific, timely, information or feedback about something that the person in question can change, it's intent is to improve the work, and it's given directly and privately before it's given publicly.

Action Organizing

"The power of the action is in the reaction". Saul Alinsky, community organizer

Organizing actions is not rocket science. Nor is it as simple as baking a cake. There are many elements that go into making your action successful. If you take the time at the front end to be really clear about what you are trying to do and why, it can make the difference between building real power and feeling like a flop.

If your plans are good, if you have a realistic assessment of your numbers and your resources, and if the people working on it are accountable, the only thing to be worried about is the weather. And this is no small matter and should be factored in. Sitting on a street in January in Michigan is not going to quickly move people to stronger actions. So be smart about what you are asking people to participate in. After all, we're assuming that you want them to come back again!

Most often actions are part of a larger organizing effort or campaign. In this it true for you action it is important to have a sense of escalation.

Some thoughts about strategy...

Strategy means looking at the big picture

Strategy is about concentrating resources in the right place

Strategy is knowing when to use your resources as well as what kind to use.

Strategy is knowing who has the power to make the decision.

Some Questions to Consider When Planning an Action

Goals: what are we trying to accomplish? Are your goals concrete, tangible, winnable

Target: who are we trying to impact/move/influence?

Message/Demands: What is your message? Who are the other audiences besides the target, what do we want them to know, what do we want them to do? Do the message and target fit together in a way that is easily understandable? Can it be summed up in a "slogan" What is your slogan, theme, sound bite? Does it fit on a banner? Are your demands clear and simple? Do you have several fallback demands?

Mobilization: How many do you need/want for the action? How many people can you mobilize? Do you have turnout goals? Is there a good turnout plan for the action, including last-minute reminder phone calls, email blast etc? How will you change the plan if you don't have enough people?

Scenario: what will happen? what does it look like? Is the action symbolic or disruptive? Is it public or secret? Will your action be *fun* and powerful? Is your group comfortable with the plan? Will the plan be outside the experience of the target? Does it have a begin, middle and end? How does the scenario communicate your message without word—where the visuals alone communicate your message. Consider timing. Is your event competing with other things, can people come? The more your event/action contains novelty, conflict, new data, simplicity, humor, prominent figure involved, civil disobedience, bright props and images, local impact, holidays, anniversaries the more coverage it will get.

Action Site: How does your action site relate to your target? Is it one and the same? If there are multiple action sites which you are considering, which best communicates your message and will accommodate your action. (Some things to consider in choosing an action

site are size, visibility, access, proximity to roads, phones etc, fences, security, sidewalks, public space nearby, parking, tenants etc) Have you scouted the building and made a floor plan? Do you know where to find: elevator and stairs, bathrooms, payphone, parking or nearest transit stops, the target's office. Can the site accommodate disabled members? Are there security cameras, how big is the sidewalk, is there a public space nearby? Are there parking garages? Who are the other tenants?

Program: How are we communicating? Speakers, performance, poetry, story boards, videos.

Publicity: How will you get the word out? – fliers, postcards, webpages, emails, posters, ads, psa's

Logistics: do you have all the things you need?

- Signs, Banners, Flags
- Day Of leaflet
- Sound System
- Bullhorns and batteries
- Sign In Sheets, clip boards, pens
- Noisemakers, whistles, drums
- Puppets or other visual props
- Legal instructions, marshal! instructions
- Chant sheets
- Cameras, film
- Food, drinks
- Transportation (busses, vans, cars) & routes for drivers
- Set Up crew
- Clean up crew
- Security arm bands
- Day of Press packets
- Communication equipment (radios, phones)
- Bail money

- **Props:** Make it visible, participatory, a picture is worth 1000 words

- **Training:** Are people prepared for their roles, the action etc?

- **Legal/Police:** do we seek permits or not, will we have a liaison team on the day of?

- **CD/DA Support:** strategy, plan, recruit, training, get out of jail support- food, drivers, court plan etc... Do you have all the legal information you need? Are there lawyers on call?

- **Security/Traffic Plan:** what is needed? Who will coordinate, train, recruit? What are police plans and contingencies, how to protect participants, how to deal with provocateurs

Media: How do we publicize our issues and message? If you want the media, have they been notified? Have you:

- Sent a press advisory including a notice of your photo opportunity and highlighting your gimmick, a week ahead of time?
- Called the daybook a week ahead of time?
- Advance calls to reporters pitching story/giving background/spin
- Sent day before press release
- Called assignment editors the day before the action?
- Prepared a release or press packet (including background materials) for distribution on the day of the action?
- ID & train/prep spokespeople to talk with the media at the action itself?

Staffing: -Develop decision-making structure (Spokesouncil, Tactical Team)

ID all "staffing" or roles or areas of responsibility that you need for the action

- Team/march leader
- Police Liaisons
- Marshall, PeaceKeeper, Security, Traffic
- Leafletters
- Media person
- Organizational spokesperson
- Set up crew
- Clean up crew
- Drivers
- Chant leaders
- Prop distribution & collection
- Equipment distribution & collection
- Sign-in team
 - Get out of jail people, lawyers

Communications: how will we communicate during the action? what equipment will we need? Where will we get it? What are the protocols?

Coordination/Prep- do you have a prep meetings planned to review scenarion, communications, maps, and make sure teams working together are familiar with what needs to be done?

Debrief: Who will debrief the action and where will the debriefing occur?

Media Skills for Direct Action!

Despite the fact that virtually all media outlets are owned by corporations, the media is still a powerful tool for communicating our message to broader audiences. Many outlets will try

to devalue and marginalize us. But if we plan in advance and work together we can get some of our message through.

Develop answers to difficult media interview questions *before* you attend demonstrations. Don't put it off, hoping that inspiration will strike at the moment when the microphone is thrust in your face. It's good to use the same answers as your friends – that increases the chances that the sound bites you worked out together will actually get into print or on the air.

An additional reason for working out answers in advance, is that what you say to the press can be used in court against people who are arrested – such as you and your friends. Even if you yourself are prepared to accept the consequences of whatever you say, you may be changing the fate of others. *Be particularly careful about questions which imply that you believe you're doing something wrong, or that you're acting with ill-will or carelessness.* For example:

Question: Did you come here to get arrested?
Answer: I'm not "here to get arrested." We don't *want* to go to jail, but we're willing to risk our freedom to end the war in Iraq.

Don't feel obliged to answer a difficult question – you can reply with one of your sound bites, even if it doesn't match the question. For example:

Question: How many of these people are going to get arrested?
Answer: We're here to protest the illegal and immoral policies of the Bush Administration

And there's always the classic response:

I'd rather not be interviewed. Would you like me to introduce you to _____, our media liaison?

Listen for negative assumptions underlying a question. Bring them out into the open and neutralize them. For example:

Question: Aren't you disappointed by the small turnout today?
Answer: Actually, we're amazed at how many people showed up, on such short notice.

Question: Do you think your beliefs entitle you to break the law?
Answer: Sometimes we do have to break a small law, in order to protect our liberty or our lives. That's the principle of civil disobedience, as practiced by two great Americans: Henry Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Additional Difficult Questions:

Aren't you concerned about the huge security cost to NYC, to deal with protesters?

Do you have a job? Do you pay taxes?

With all the legal ways to make your opinion known – marches, public speaking, petitions, letter-writing, voting, etc. – why do you insist on breaking the law?

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.

DURING AN ACTION

PROPOSED 10 MUTUAL ASSURANCES BETWEEN GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS PLANNING RNC RELATED ACTIVITIES

These Assurances are a result of different movements and sectors learning how to be in real Solidarity with one another. Solidarity can be seen as how we use the different privileges we have to equalize power among us. We are very different groups. We are not necessarily immediate allies nor are we each other's greatest enemy. WE have difference goals and strategies and there are many things on which we do not agree. But, we will be in the streets together and 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. As we take to the streets together, let us work to be in solidarity with one another. The following Mutual Assurances offer ways in which we can make our solidarity real.

1. Maintain solidarity with and respect the guidelines of all permitted activities, recognizing that there are many individuals who seek a safe and peaceful protest environment.
2. Support and participate in efforts to assure civil liberties for everyone in NYC, including the right to organize civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action without that organizing being criminalized or disrupted.
3. Speak out against any pre-emptive arrests, raids on activist spaces, or attacks on independent journalists and other media.
- 4 Be conscious of and speak out against police targeting and differential treatment of people based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or appearance.

5. Not to turn people over to the police, or share information with the police about other groups.
6. Not to publicly criticize the tactics used by other parts of our movements or cooperate with media efforts to be divisive or portray good protester/bad protester.
7. Publicly condemn police repression and brutality.
8. Publicly support rights of free speech, the right to organize, and the right to dissent for all.
9. Be conscious that if violence or property destruction does occur, we must do what we can to help to prevent it from being blown out of proportion and dominating the media coverage.
10. Remember that, when all is said and done, our greatest win will be an activist community with a renewed sense of strength and unity.

In addition please consider these points

- 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.
- Do not intentionally put people at risk who have not chosen it
- 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.
- 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.

Street Safety

- Pay attention to what is happening around you. (This includes other protestors and police!)
- Keep breathing and stay connected to the earth--this will prevent panic. Panic reduces critical judgement and our ability to make good decisions. Panic also spreads quickly. Keep breathing
 - Get a good map – used colored markers to highlight key sites, you can laminate it easily with clear mailing tape.
 - Scout the area ahead of time, particularly during the days and times of the

action. Be familiar with streets, allies, public buildings, restaurants etc. Identify “safe spaces”

- Have a re-group plan in case you get separated (one or two places you decide in advance. Public buildings like train stations, bus terminals, restaurant can be great re-group sites) An easy technique for Buddies is to agree to go back to the same spot you last saw each other.
- Have an exit strategy – how do you get out of an area.
- Have contingencies planned in advance to minimize major decision-making in the street
- Don't act on rumors – have scouts or communication system to verify what you hear.
- Bring a change of clothes in case of tear gas or a need to change your appearance
- Crowd Dynamics – what's going on, who's around me, are they my allies, do you feel connected?
- Cop Dynamics – what are they doing, what is their formation, have they put on gas masks, who is in charge, what are they doing. What does the energy feel like?
- Dangerous moments: at the end of a demonstration when you think it is over.
- Nourishment – carry a little something to eat like a power bar, nuts or fruit and lots of water
-

Confrontation and De-Escalation: if the shit hits the fan....

- Know what your 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 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?

WHAT TO BRING TO AN ACTION

WHAT TO WEAR

- comfortable, protective shoes that you can run in
- wear layers: clothing which covers most of your skin to protect from sun and pepper spray exposure, pant with deep pockets are helpful.
- Don't wear things which can easily be grabbed (i.e.: dangly earrings or other jewelry, ties, loose hair)
- a fresh clothes in plastic bag (in case yours get contaminated or if you need to change your appearance)
- a cap or hat to protect you from the sun and from chemical weapons
- shatter-resistant eye protection ie: sunglasses, swim goggles, or gas mask
- gas mask or goggles paired with a respirator or bandanna to protect during chemical weapons - deployment
- weather-related gear (i.e.: rain gear or sun hat)
- heavy-duty gloves if you plan to handle hot tear gas canisters
- Appropriate colors, capes, patches, costumes, scarves, etc.
(Have a second outfit for a second day of action, if tear gas is a possibility.)

WHAT TO BRING

- Water! Lots of water in plastic bottle with squirt or spray top, to drink and to wash off your skin or eyes if needed
- energy snacks - trail mix, protein bars, compact stuff to munch on during the day.
- just enough money for pay-phone, food, transportation
- watch, paper, pen for accurate documentation of events, police brutality, injuries
- water- or alcohol-based sunscreen
- your inhaler, epipen, insulin or other medication if you require it -
- several days of your prescription medication and doctor's note in case of arrest
- menstrual pads, if needed. Avoid using tampons--if you're arrested you may not have a chance to change it (tampons left in more than six hours increase your risk of developing toxic shock syndrome)
- identification and/or emergency contact information.
- 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. Can provide protection for your back
- A money belt/waist belt is handy for ID, some cash, etc.
- A bandanna.

Some Nice Things to Have

Rescue remedy

Permanent markers.

A drum, rattle, finger cymbals, etc.

Sidewalk chalk.

Bubbles

Yarn

A cell phone. (Don't forget your charger.)

A watch.

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.

- Your own cup, plate silverware for those Food Not Bombs meals.

STAYING HEALTHY – Basic Medical Info

Taking good care of yourself – eating, sleeping and drinking lots of water will go along way to keeping you focused, grounded and healthy during street actions. No matter how tight our plan of action is with our affinity group, we can never really predict what will happen in an action, how the police will (over)react to our demonstration, no matter how peaceful we may be. So the more we are physically prepared the easier it will be to respond.

The Police have a wide range of "non-lethal" weapons at their disposal and we have seen that they rarely hesitate to use them. Usually their intent is to disperse us, but we know that our ability to hold political space is crucial. Here are a few tips we've learned along the way:

Batons: If they are being held horizontally to push, you can turn your back and hopefully the backpack you are carrying with extra water etc can take the blow. Or you can face them and use your hands as a soft shield. Banners and signs can also help break impact. Finally sitting down is a great way to shift the energy and thwart their ability to push is back.

If police are using them to jab, again, use pack, sign or banner as a shield. If they are swinging and you brought a helmet, now would be a good time to make sure it is on! Without, you may want to get the hell out, cover you head with your arms, if you have been hurt and go down, curl up in a fetal position and protect you head, stomach and genitals. Lie on your right side if you can to protect you liver as well.

After the police have past, apply pressure to any area that is bleeding and no doubt a medic will be there soon!

Projectiles: (Rubber, plastic, wooden bullets, bean bags, etc.). If the police have opened fire, turn your back to them in order to protect your face, throat and stomach. You may choose to slowly walk away, sit down or run. These projectiles are not non-lethal and several protestors have been seriously hurt by them. If you are shot and bruised, try and see a medic, but taking some Arnica, pills or rub will help with the bruising.

Horses: Are often used to move crowds. They are big, strong and frightening. IF you have a large group of people, sitting down like a moving carpet will scare the horse, they will not walk on what seems like uneven or moving pavement. Instead of yelling you might try singing or humming and bringing an extra apples. These horses can be our allies. Be aware however, not to get behind one of them and watch your feet. If you are sitting pull you legs in close so they don't stamp on them.

Dogs: If the police use dogs, it is important to keep your hands, arms, legs etc pulled in tight. Do not give them anything to sink their teeth into. Do not look at the dog, but make eye contact with the cop instead. Talk in a clear voice, tell them to restrain the dog, to shorten its leash, put the dog back in the vehicle etc.

Pain Compliance – should the police be in a position to arrest you, they will often use pain compliance holds if you are linked up / locked down in anyway. This is essentially applying pressure to certain places on your body where the nerves are close to the surface or they will manipulate your body in the opposite direction it is meant to go. While there are certain ways to minimize the pain, these are essentially torture techniques and resistance may cause serious harm. At some point you will likely need to let go.

Tear Gas and Pepper Spray

PREVENTION: Wash before with unscented castille soap. Don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturizers on skin as they can trap chemicals. Cover up with water repellent clothes & gear. Don't wear contact lenses.

FOR PROTECTION

- A bandanna, soaked in lemon juice or vinegar kept in a ziplock baggie to conserve moisture which can be put over your nose and mouth. Try a peeled onion.
- And shatterproof goggles. 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.
- A paint mask or filter or gas mask.
- Water bottles with squirt tops for washing eyes.

GENERAL TREATMENT FOR TEAR GAS (CS, CN) AND PEPPER SPRAY (OC)

- Stay calm & focused. You are strong. The discomfort is only temporary & will no damage you.
- Don't touch face or rub eyes. Get to fresh air, eyes open, arms out (if tear gas), breath slow & deep.
- Blow nose, spit out chemicals.
- Consider water to flush eyes & gargle. Water or Witch Hazel soaked gauze or cotton balls on closed eyes are soothing.
- When your body heats up (from running or panicking, for example), the irritation may increase. Part
- of the reason is that your pores will open allowing more absorption of the chemicals.
- Face wind, open eyes, hold arms out and walk around to let fresh air decontaminate you. Take slow
- deep breaths of clean air.
- Don't touch your eyes or your face, as you may re-contaminate yourself.
- Before you assist or treat anyone, ask them for permission first! Then explain to them what you are going to do before you do it.
- Best if cleaning solutions and water spill directly to ground so as to not contaminate clean skin,
- clothes or hair.
- Store contaminated wipes in a sealed bag.

- After treatment, wash off with cold water & replace contaminated clothes.

AFTERWARDS:

- Be aware that entering into a room with contaminated clothes, hair & skin reeking of chemicals will contaminate the room.
- Make sure that you leave a plastic bag outside or near the inside of your door to put your contaminated clothes in.
- Decontaminate with a cold shower (keeps pores closed preventing chemicals from entering skin).
- Exchange contaminated clothing for fresh.

WIPES may be clean cloth, gauze, 4x4s etc.. WATER may have 4 drops per quart of Rescue Remedy added. NORMAL SALINE (0.9% sodium solution) may be substituted for rinsing, cleaning water.

TEAR GAS (CS, CN) TREATMENT

- Effects last minutes to an hour.
- Fresh Air.
- Consider rinsing off chemicals with water.

PEPPER SPRAY (OC) TREATMENTS

Effects last up to 2 hours. If still wet on skin, carefully sponge off. Don't spread it around. Fresh Air

If there is wet pepper spray on skin, pad/sponge it up with cloth without spreading it around. If you move the oily chemical around the skin, you increase the area of painful skin.

The Protester Facial: Wipe mineral oil on skin. Immediately wipe ALL off with rubbing alcohol. Mineral oil will trap chemicals, so take it ALL off!

Other Solutions are half water, half Maalox or other liquid antacid are recommended for tear gas but NOT mint-flavored!

Some Special Conditions:

-

- **Contact lenses** are dangerous because they can trap chemicals underneath and burn your eyeball! Thus wearing your glasses is usually recommended. If you wear contacts they must be removed if you are hit with tear gas or pepper spray or serious damage to your eyes can occur. Disposables are great, but still carry your glasses and/or bring a spare pair of lenses. If yours are not disposable, keep a case with you, once contaminated they may be history however.

..... **Asthma** is seriously irritated by tear gas, and can be fatal. Try and stay out of the gas or spray and make sure you bring your inhaler.

- **Pregnancy**, being in this toxic environment is not advisable for you or your baby. Stay out of it if you can.

LEGAL

How to do Group Legal Support People Who May Risk Arrest

For actions and demonstrations the role of support in a civil disobedience action is crucial to those risking arrest. Support people accept the responsibility of being contacts to the outside once a member of the affinity group is arrested. During and after a mass action support members need to stay in touch with support people from other affinity groups, for information sharing and emotional support.

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.

Ideally a Group Legal Support team is at least 3 persons, two on-site at the action, and one person not at the action at all. Check-in with each person in your group at least every night – is everyone home for the night? Keep up w/ changing intentions around arrest risk and jail solidarity. Off-site support is encourage to check in daily on how things are going.

Before Any Action Begins

- Make sure that each person in your group has completed and given to you their support information form. (see Support form for detailed information including full name, jail name, emergency contact, special needs ie: medical, and plans for jail solidarity, etc.)
- Keep all of the forms and any ID, passports, keys, bail \$\$, medicines in one safest possible place.
- Communicate with the Action Legal Team: your role; who your are supporting; how to contact you; how to contact your back-ups, both on-site and off-site; what to do if you and your back-up end up arrested or unable to provide legal support.
- Communicate all critical information to off-site support: a summary of the individual support forms, the one safest place with forms, ID, bail \$\$, and medicines; who your contact is on the Action Legal Team.
- 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 where arrestees are likely to be taken and have transportation to get there.
- Know the phone numbers and contact people for legal, medics, media, and action support.
- Set-up email lists to friend and family in case political pressure is needed as well as contact information for decision-makers.

During the Action

- *DON'T GET ARRESTED.* – Pay attention to what is happening, stay separate from the group etc.
- Make sure legal and other contact numbers are written discreetly on your body. It's amazing how easy it is to forget!
- Once arrests begin, write down each individual's name, and the time, place and nature of the arrest (get name badge number and police force. Note whether there was any police misconduct (brutality, inappropriate words), circumstances and witnessed
- Remember to take care of yourself as well as others.
- Just before meet and recheck plans and needs with group
- Bring extra food and water
- Have pens and paper to take legal observation notes, if possible, bring a camera or video camera.
- Get info, money, keys and other things from people who may not have planned on being arrested
- Keep in touch with arrestees as long as possible, noting any changes in arrest strategies, etc.
- At least one support person should stay at place of arrest until all members of your group are arrested, and at least one should go to where those arrested are being taken.
- Once all have been arrested or are out of risk, call legal and give information.

After Arrests Occur

- Go to processing facilities and attempt to find out if your people are all there and what the charges are
- Contact Action Legal Team with individual information needed in jail: who is giving names, who isn't, who has requested administrative separation, any list of demands. Provide ID, bail \$\$, and medicine as needed.
- Be visible to police so they know the arrestees are not alone.
- Make calls you have been asked to make in the case of arrest.
- Contact the off-site support person with all information.
- Follow individual instructions regarding contacting home.
- Continue to facilitate the flow of information between the legal system, unarrested affinity group members, and family and friends at home. Make sure to have someone near the agreed upon phone at all times, so that all calls from jail can be received. Remind people calling that phones may be tapped (the jail's and/or yours).
- Being kind to yourself. Remind yourself that the experience of providing jail support can be harder in some ways, and lonelier, than being in jail. Support other support people -- working together will ease the load.
- Organize political pressure: e-mails, faxes, and phone calls to decision-makers; vigils, marches, singing, drumming, and chanting outside where they are being held.
- Be available until everyone in your affinity group is out of jail. Be there with hugs, cheers, food, drink, and an open, listening heart when they step out of jail. If you must leave make sure the legal office has all the relevant information.
- Coordinate rides for those released, this may mean collecting bus money etc.

Support at the Courthouse:

Be present during court appearances, and try to keep track of the following information for

each person your affinity group. During a mass action, call this information into the office.

- Name of defendant; Jane/John Doe number, if no name.
- Charge(s).
- Plea: Demurrer, Not Guilty, Guilty, No Contest, "Creative Plea."
- If guilty or no contest, sentence imposed.
- If demurrer or not guilty:
- Amount of bail, if applicable.
- Whether bail is paid or not.
- Date, time and place of next court appearance.
- Name of judge or magistrate.
- Name of defense lawyer.
- Name of prosecutor.
- Any other information that seems relevant.

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 (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)
 - Organize a debrief with each person to gather information useful for lawsuits and the next action: who was arrested, what were the circumstances, what were the charges, what were the experiences in jail. Make a record. Communicate this information with the legal team.
 - Assess people's emotional well-being. See Trauma

Legal System Flowchart

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAPPENS	CHOICES
Warning or Command	Officer may give warning to or leave or command to stop doing something.	- Stay or leave -Don't do or stop doing actions.
Arrest	Officer physically grabs you, takes you to police wagon or squad car. May say you are under arrest. Pat search, sometimes handcuffs. Taken to holding area.	- Walk - Go limp - Flee (if left unguarded)
Processing and Booking	Police question arrestees concerning information for arrest reports (name/address/occupation/social security number/ financial); may try to get additional information for intelligence. Possible photographing/fingerprinting/property and clothes may be taken.	-Decide what, if any, information to give police; e.g. false, correct or no name. - Refuse to post bond -Demand no cash bonds or equal bonds for all (bail & jail solidarity)
Charging	Prosecutor decides what charges to pursue	
First Court	Appear in court alone, or most likely with other arrestees Attempt to dispose of case by plea or	-Lawyers or Pro Se - Plea

Date	trial, or continue case for bench or jury trial or plea negotiations later. Prosecutor not always ready for trial.	- Bench Trial - Demand jury trial in future
Trial	Trials can vary from: - a few minute bench trial with or without a lawyer - to a full jury trial with expert witnesses lasting a week or more, - or any place in. between.	- Defense based on noncommission of acts and/or necessity of actions - Small or large resources of time and money
Verdict	judge or jury decides - Acquittal (not guilty) - Guilty	
Sentencing	Hearing on appropriate sentence	Can testify why actions were justified, necessary, etc., and your background. Sentencing statement is powerful opportunity to bring out political and moral issues, show non-recalcitrance. Remain silent

WHAT IS JAIL/COURT SOLIDARITY?

Jail/Court Solidarity is the name for a variety of tactics by which direct action arrestees influence the legal process and take care of each other through collective action. Through jail solidarity we can take power in a situation designed to make us powerless. We do this by making our decisions as a group, by acting in harmony with each other, and by committing ourselves to safeguard each other's well being. Jail/court solidarity involves a combination of non-cooperation techniques and collective bargaining. Jail/court solidarity has been used effectively in the civil rights, peace, environmental, and other movements to protect activists who were arrested.

The power of solidarity lies in three basic facts:

1. In a mass arrest situation the authorities need our cooperation to process us--from booking to jail to court.
2. It is very expensive and politically difficult to keep us in jail.
3. There may be little room for us in already overcrowded jail and court systems. Thus we have great collective bargaining power. Additionally, continued publicity and public support for our release can place even more pressure on authorities.

WHY JAIL/COURT SOLIDARITY?

The reasons for utilizing jail/court solidarity are multifold:

•••••• To move our court appearances and sentencing quickly, freeing us for work or other actions. Those from outside the area can participate without having to return for future court dates or risk receiving bench warrants if they can't make their court date.

•••••• To ensure that all who participate are protected from discriminatory treatment. Authorities will often single out a few activists for harsher treatment to intimidate people from engaging in future direct actions.

•••••• To fight sentences of probation and large fines that are used to break movements.

•••••• To face court and jail together with the strength of a group, rather than as single individuals.

•••••• To extend the action, keeping the attention of the public and the media, and demonstrating our strong commitment to making change.

Jail solidarity strengthens our movement and gives us a greater sense of community.

SOLIDARITY DEMANDS

Here are some goals for which solidarity has been used, but they are not the only ones that can be considered.

Equal treatment for everyone in jail and in court

No one should be singled out and subjected to harsher treatment, including repeat offenders, non-U.S. citizens, known organizers, those more difficult to arrest and remove, and non-cooperators, regardless of whether we receive state or federal charges.

No probation or fines

Probation discourages those activists who receive it from participating in future actions. It gives the court system the right to interfere with our lives for months--sometimes years--and makes us liable for longer sentences if we're arrested while on probation. Paying fines or bail puts money into the system and drains the limited funds available to us for sustaining our campaigns. Fines and bail are a form of discrimination on the basis of income: people with money get out of jail, and people without money do not.

No isolation of individual or parts of the group.

We don't want the jail authorities to isolate the people they think are leaders or

troublemakers.

Medical Treatment for sick or injured people, Vegan Meals,

We want to make sure that everyone is gets the attention and treatment they need

Mass court appearances in the largest groups possible.

This way we know for sure that our demands are being met, so we can respond appropriately.

SOLIDARITY TACTICS

Every time there's a choice in the legal process, activists can either cooperate or make things more difficult for the authorities. If we resolve to noncooperate peacefully or to stay in jail, we have great bargaining power. Here are some of the ways we can use our solidarity to achieve our goals:

Refuse "cite outs," also called citation releases. Refuse to sign or accept the citation.

In most actions individuals are offered a chance to sign a citation release, which is a promise to appear at a later date for court. The presence of our physical bodies in jail is the greatest leverage we have on the system. If we cite out and come back for court as individuals, we have no way of assuring that all of us will receive equal treatment.

Refuse to give identifying information (name, address, etc.)

This can deter the police from citing some of us out involuntarily, and keeping others in jail for harsher treatment, e.g.. repeat offenders, non-U.S. citizens, noncooperators, etc. Leave your ID at home if you are not planning to cooperate.

Noncooperation with processing or jail routines.

Refusing to walk, refusing to get on or off buses, refusing to eat, etc.

Risking re-arrest.

Second and third waves of arrests can be used to stay in solidarity with those singled out for unequal treatment.

Pleading not guilty (thereby threatening to go to trial) demanding a court-appointed lawyer, and not waiving our right to a speedy trial.

These powerful bargaining tactics, which are based on the threat of using up the system's limited courtroom time and resources and using the court as a soapbox for our issues, may pressure the court into granting our demands.

EXCEPTIONS

The use of jail solidarity should not deter anyone from participating in the action. Pressure, guilt and coercion for everyone to do the same thing is counter to the spirit of solidarity. People who employ jail solidarity tactics need to leave plenty of room for people who do not wish to join them. The strength of solidarity comes from the voluntary agreement of

everyone who takes part in it. And solidarity

Because of the divisiveness it can cause, solidarity has not necessarily been kept with those who violate action agreements (such as remaining nonviolent), are caught carrying illegal drugs (never bring 'em to an action), or those with outstanding warrants (clear those traffic tickets).

PLAN AHEAD

For jail solidarity to be effective, decisions about demands and tactics must be made, to the greatest extent possible, before reaching jail. Solidarity differs in degrees and types. On some issues the whole group may reach consensus. In other cases, one or more affinity groups may act autonomously. Keep others informed of your plans.

When consensus on solidarity gets difficult, remember that our tactics are means for achieving our demands, not ends in themselves. We cannot always achieve all of our demands, so it is good to act with a strength that is also flexible. Using solidarity for trivial matters can minimize its impact, but underestimating the groups' power can lead to fear and hastily considered actions.

SOLIDARITY AT EACH STAGE OF THE LEGAL PROCESS

These are sample demands and tactics, actual ones will be decided on by each affinity group or cluster and coordinated through the spokescouncil.

	ARREST	CUSTODY	COURT
DEMANDS	No separation of individuals or small groups. Same charges for everyone.	No separation of individuals or small groups. Same charges for everyone. Same court appearance date for everyone.	Same charges for everyone Same sentence for everyone Proposed plea bargain: ••••••• Everyone is charged with a traffic infraction, and all charges are dropped. ••••••• Everyone is sentenced to "time served"; with no additional jail time, no probation, no fines, and no restitution.
TACTICS	Stay in custody by refusing to give your name/address, and refusing to sign a citation	Stay in custody by refusing to give name/address, and refusing to sign a citation. Refuse to follow orders. Go limp. Sing, dance, strip, etc. Fast (liquid, not dry).	Insist on a trial, by pleading not guilty Insist on a personal, court appointed lawyer. Insist on a speedy trial, by "refusing to waive time."

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING IN JAIL

The prison system is designed to control us, dehumanize us and break our spirit by controlling the space we inhabit, the way our time is structured, and the information we can send and receive. By organizing inside we can take back some control over our lives

Information and Communications:

- Find out who has been arrested, which affinity groups are in jail, who is missing or has been isolated. Consolidate the information so that one or two phone calls 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.
- Liaison 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 Agenda in Jail (When/if 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 information on the action, legal issues, negotiations.
- Roles and responsibilities in the group—caretakers, liaisons, 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, remember conversations are monitored.)
- Questions, feeling, fears
- Evaluation/closing

Answers to Legal Questions

If I'm arrested at the RNC in New York City, how will the Legal Team be working

with me?

First, you have to help the Legal Team locate you, by calling in. You're entitled to make phone calls, after you're booked. All telephone calls you make while in custody can be monitored, so you must not discuss anything which is supposed to be a secret! Write important phone numbers on your body, because the authorities may take away any papers you have with you. Once you're detained somewhere, a representative from the group must call the Legal office and report on how many people are with you; whether there are any problems; and what your group's solidarity agreements are. The Legal Team will dispatch lawyers to see you, and the office will also be able to keep you updated on what everyone else is doing and how the negotiations are proceeding.

During the initial stages of a mass action, lawyers are useful chiefly for passing messages between groups of protesters who are being detained in different places. When lawyers arrive, it's critical to use a facilitator to conduct your meeting (other than a lawyer), to organize questions and proposals. You control the decision-making process – not the police, not the lawyers.

Sometimes, the police or jail authorities lie and say there isn't a lawyer there for you. Also, the authorities may insist that you give them the name of a specific lawyer. The best solution, unless you know for sure that there's a particular lawyer waiting to see you, is just to keep insisting that the authorities bring you a lawyer from the Legal Team. Very often members of your legal team will be waiting anxiously to talk to you, but won't be allowed in until you exert pressure. Be sure to call the Legal Team office to help coordinate Legal Team visits and to verify what the authorities are telling you.

When the Lawyers arrive your group should have your reports and questions organized in advance. The Legal Team members have been instructed to address the following issues with you each time they come:

- 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 solidarity decisions?

What crimes could we be charged with?

Protestors are usually charged with infractions (not punishable by jail time) or misdemeanors (punishable by a year in jail or less). Typical infractions are: jaywalking; littering, or driving beyond the speed limit. Typical misdemeanors are: trespassing; minor property damage; or resisting an officer. Sometimes activists are charged with felonies (punishable by over a year in jail), such as assaulting an officer, or property destruction over \$250. Prosecutors 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." Also police charges are the recommendations, it is the Prosecutor who sets the charge. Do not bring weapons (including your trusty pocket knife) or illegal drugs to the action. You will likely get additional charges and put a major strain on solidarity.

How long could we end up in jail?

The amount of time served during mass actions in the past has ranged from two hours to two weeks. For the RNC plan on at least 2-3 days in custody.

Where would we be locked up, if we're actually detained?

The NYPD has not yet announce plans for holding protestors, although they have said they anticipate 1000 arrests a day. Usually, in these situations, the authorities keep us in large buildings, like schools, gyms or armories.

What should I say to the police, the sheriffs, the federal marshals or the FBI?

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.)

Whenever law enforcement officers ask us anything besides name and address, it's legally safest to say: "I am going to remain silent. I want a lawyer." Once you say these words, you've invoked the constitutional rights, and the authorities are supposed to stop questioning you. If they don't stop, just keep repeating the formula. Remember, anything you say to the authorities can and will be used against you and your 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 these words and letting everyone know that this is our policy.

Law enforcement authorities may try to engage you in a casual conversation or friendly argument. Don't be sucked in. Questioning people is what they do for a living. Be aware that the authorities are legally allowed to lie, when they're investigating and they are trained to be manipulative! Sometimes the authorities tell you that it's okay to answer their questions because you're not under suspicion, you're just a witness. It's awfully easy to go from being a witness to being a suspect, once you start answering questions. Just use the magic words: "I'm going to remain silent; I want a lawyer." Make sure, when you're arrested with other people, that all the rest of the group knows the magic words and promises to use them.

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

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.

What happens during booking, and how much do I have to cooperate?

Booking is the process in which the police take your photograph, your fingerprints and information such as name and address. They usually take your property, too, and are supposed to give you a receipt for it. It is a misdemeanor to give a false name – or other false information – to a police officer, under both state and federal law. However, simply refusing to give information at booking is not a crime. It's perfectly legal to withhold any or all information, because you have the right to remain silent. You can just say the magic words: "I'm going to remain silent; I want a lawyer."

If you do not give the police your name and address, the police will be unlikely to release you with a citation – and this is critical to the solidarity tactic of packing the jail (which gives us the bargaining power to make sure everyone is treated the same and gets a light sentence). At the risk of pointing out the obvious, if you decline to give the police any information, but accidentally leave your wallet in your pocket, your plans will be foiled.

What are citing out, release on your own recognizance, bond and bail?

Citing out is a type of release from custody in which you sign a promise to appear in court, the "citation" (usually a form which looks like a traffic ticket). It's up to the police whether or not to offer you citation release, and it happens around the time you're arrested. In large actions, the police often desperately want everyone to cite out, because the authorities do not have the resources to keep everyone in custody.

Bail, bond and release on your own recognizance are other ways of getting out of jail. It's up to the judge whether or not to offer you these types of release, and it usually happens around the time you first get to court (having been in jail meanwhile). If the judge doesn't trust your promise to come to court for future appearances, s/he will demand bail (money which you pay to the court) or bond (collateral like a house or land) to be forfeit if you don't appear at scheduled hearings. Release on personal recognizance (PR) is simply your promise to come to court for scheduled hearings, without your having to put up money or collateral. Usually, you will only be released on your own recognizance if you can prove that you: (1) are not a danger to society, (2) don't have a record of failures to appear, and (3) have ties to the local community, like a home, job, school, family, etc.

How do we plea bargain?

Plea bargaining is the negotiation process we engage in with the prosecutor and judge, in which we agree to plead guilty in exchange for a specific, advantageous sentence. The more people who are arrested and the stronger their solidarity, the easier it is to plea bargain. To use solidarity, you'll need to seek consensus on your demands, your tactics and your proposed deal.

Plea bargaining demands: A key demand in a mass action is that everyone who acted within the nonviolence guidelines gets the same charges and the same sentence, even though some people refused to cooperate with the police and/or have a record of prior criminal convictions.

Plea bargaining tactics: In a case involving multiple defendants, exercising the following rights creates leverage for plea bargaining with the prosecution.

Each defendant demands a court-appointed attorney.
Each defendant pleads "not guilty."
Each defendant refuses to waive time or their right to a speedy trial.

You're entitled to have the court appoint a lawyer to represent you if you're low-income and facing jail-time. When the court has to appoint lots of lawyers, it costs the government more money. And when there are lots of defense lawyers, there is far more work for the prosecution, which has to respond to all their written and oral arguments. Scheduling with all these lawyers also gets very tricky. (You're not obliged to work with a court-appointed lawyer, nor are there enough of these attorneys for everyone anyway, but you should ask for one.)

When you plead "not guilty," your case is set for trial. The court system is not set up to hold trials in all cases. The vast majority of cases are settled through negotiation. Trials involving lots of defendants and lawyers can be particularly complicated and time-consuming for the judge and prosecutor.

You have the right to a speedy trial. When you "refuse to waive time," you're insisting on having a speedy trial (within 60 days if you're in jail, within 90 days if you're free). This creates pressure on both the court calendar and the prosecution.

In plea bargaining, we frequently exercise these three rights simply for tactical reasons. Once the prosecution agrees to our demands and our proposed plea bargain, we give up these rights, as part of the deal.

Example of a plea bargain for the RNC action could be: each of us can plead guilty to a traffic infraction – such as jaywalking – in return for having all other charges dropped. Each of us is sentenced to time served (the time we already spent in custody), with no fines, no restitution and no probation.

What other vocabulary do we need, in order to plea bargain effectively?

When you're plea bargaining, you may be negotiating over the following elements of your sentence, any of which can be combined:

"Credit for time served": You normally get credit for any day (or part of a day) which you spend in custody, and this is applied to your sentence. It's great when you can negotiate a plea bargain in which the sentence is just the time already spent in custody, with no other penalties.

"Diversion": You do community service and/or pay an administrative fee, and when you complete the requirements, the charges against you are dismissed – so you don't get a conviction on your record. However, diversion frequently counts as a conviction for immigration or professional licensing purposes. Other names for diversion are "deferred prosecution" and "dispositional continuance."

"Probation": If you're on formal probation, you have a probation officer who make rules about whom you can see, where you can go, how often you get drug-tested, etc. If you're on informal probation, you don't have anybody supervising you; nothing happens unless you get arrested for something new (like another protest).

"Fines and Restitution": A fine is money you are ordered to pay to the government, while restitution is money you are ordered to pay to the victim. For example, the authorities might want to fine protesters for committing crimes, and also want protesters to pay restitution to the City of New York for damaging public property.

What exactly is resisting an officer?

Struggling with the police or trying to break away is obviously resisting; even just touching an officer with your fingers is usually considered an "assault." Don't touch their cars, dogs or equipment either -- those are considered extensions of the officer. Going limp while may be technically resisting is rarely charged. 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.

What would they do with minors (people under 18)?

Those who are obviously minors are almost always separated from the adults upon arrest. Obviously, minors can use the same solidarity tactics as adults, such as refusing to give their names and addresses, to prevent being cited out. Minors generally speaking can only be released to a parent or legal guardian. Therefore it will be helpful for the minor to use a juvenile consent form designating a nearby adult they can be released to. This requires a parent's signature and must be done in advance! Make sure to have at least three signed copies of this form: one with your parent, one with your designated pick-up adult, and one with the legal team. Occasionally, the parental consent form is may not be accepted by the authorities, and they might insist on having your parent or guardian come get you after all. Having your parent or guardian reachable by phone is highly advisable.

What could happen to people who aren't U.S. citizens?

Those activists who are not native or naturalized U.S. citizens face higher risk. Most law enforcement officials are quick to turn over to the INS people they suspect of being non-citizens. If we use solidarity tactics well, the risk to international protesters is reduced, particularly if we plea bargain for an infraction (which has no immigration consequences). Typically nonviolent action with misdemeanor charges are not considered "crimes of moral turpitude" which is one of the measures they use to consider deportation. In this new era of the War on Terror, risks may be greater.

What could happen to transgendered people?

Those activists who are transgendered have the right to be put in Administrative Segregation, meaning they are not held with the men or the women. It is important to find out what the person wants and then work to insure their needs are respected

Will engaging in civil disobedience prevent me from getting jobs or getting into college?

If you have the qualifications for the job or school, a civil disobedience arrest or conviction is not likely to stand in your way – especially if the charges are dismissed or you plead out to an infraction. Besides, many institutions are actually interested in people who have consciences.

Could we lose our licenses (medical, teaching, etc.)?

Many teachers, lawyers and health care professionals have engaged in misdemeanor-level civil disobedience, and we are not aware of any of these who have actually lost their licenses. Most licensing administrations are tolerant of minor “acts of conscience.” However, felony convictions, as opposed to misdemeanor convictions, could well result in temporary or permanent suspension of professional licenses.

How do I handle disabilities so I can participate fully in the action?

Make sure your group members know about any access issues you face. If you have a hidden disability, your group needs to know that, too. For example, if you have dyslexia or seizures, your group members need to know how and when they can help you. Jail authorities frequently separate those of us with obvious disabilities (like people who use wheelchairs), putting them in the infirmary, where they're often neglected. It's an important solidarity issue that you refuse to let the authorities separate people with disabilities.

How do I handle medical needs so I can participate fully in the action?

If you have a potentially dangerous medical condition, wear a “medic-alert bracelet.” You should be able to get them at most drug stores. People with asthma, diabetes, seizures, etc. should wear a bracelet while they participate in the action. This will make the police take you much more seriously if you start to have difficulties.

The only way to ensure receiving medication while in jail is to bring a recently dated doctor's letter explaining your requirements. Make four copies of the doctor's letter. Keep two copies of this letter on your person (one to keep and one to give to the jail medical staff), leave the third copy with your group supporters, and leave the fourth copy with your legal team.

If you use prescription medicine, bring it with you in its original container, with the pharmacy label on it. The police or jail staff will still probably take away your medication at some point, but at least you'll have it up until they take it away. Once you're in jail, the medical staff there is required to supply you with your regular medications from their own infirmary. If substitution is a problem, have your doctor specify “no substitutions” in his/her letter. Leave a copy with the 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. A difficulty which we often encounter is delay in getting medication. Try to plan for this by taking your medication just before arrest, and by keeping your next dose somewhere safe and handy. Also, don't take all your medication to the demonstration – leave some where you are sleeping for when you're released.

Do I have to tell the authorities whether I'm HIV+?

You do not have to tell the police or the jail authorities whether you're HIV+. Of course, if you're in jail and you don't want to interrupt your treatment regimen, you'll have to tell the jail medical staff. Be aware that if the police claim that you somehow transferred body fluids to them, they may get the judge to order that you have a blood test. And the results of that test would then be revealed to others.

Can I get a special diet in jail, or vitamins and herbs?

They're not going to give you regular vitamins or herbs or homeopathic medicine. Sometimes they'll provide a vitamin supplement if you're pregnant or anemic, but you have to get a doctor's orders for that. As far as diet is concerned, you have a legal right to kosher food if you're Jewish and to a non-pork diet if you're Muslim. If you have glucose, lactose or gluten intolerance or severe food allergies, get a doctor's letter (and don't count on the jail kitchen staff being able to follow directions). Vegetarians are generally told, "Just don't eat the meat." Vegans, fruitarians and macrobiotics are almost completely out of luck however vegan meals have been won through persistent demands. The best advice is to eat well before the action and do your best to manage with the regular jail food.

What about contact lenses in jail?

It's generally much simpler to wear glasses to the action, if you have a pair. Jails usually don't let you keep your own contact lens solution. The jail may provide its own solutions to you, but they might not be what you need. The disposable contacts which you can wear for two weeks without removing are probably the best option.

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." This may seem formal, but it helps keep the police from claiming that they thought you agreed

A final word on lawyers...

In a mass civil resistance setting, your best protection is in solidarity, not attorneys. Use lawyers to communicate between groups of protestors who've been detained in separate places, or for dealing with problems like getting medication in jail. Lawyers can be helpful in negotiating plea agreements -- though it's important to have direct dialogue with the judges and prosecutors yourselves. Resist the temptation to turn to lawyers for advice on issues which are really political, rather than legal. This can be harder than it sounds, especially when you're dealing with difficult or unexpected events (and every civil resistance action has its tough moments). The best answers come from your own common sense and from

the collective experience of the community. When in doubt, take time out. Get more information. Talk to your friends. Don't believe that your goals are impossible, just because someone in a suit or a uniform said so.

AFTER THE ACTION

Coming Out of Jail Stronger

Jail can be a powerfully transformative experience. It allows people with a good bit of privilege to experience what it means to have no rights or respect. You can begin to understand what many people of color experience on a daily basis in the country. Some of the things to anticipate in jail and once you are out are:

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

Everyone participating in an action is confronting the abusive power of the state. Our response to the abuse that we experience will depend on our self-care and support in the midst of that experience, on our personal histories, as well as the actually traumatic incidents that occurred. Circumstances that are likely to produce high levels of post-traumatic stress are personal exposure to physical, mental, and sexual assault, witnessing the assault of others, and prolonged or intense fear. Factors that place us at greater risk for post-traumatic stress are having a history of abuse, not getting support that we need from our allies, and being separated from others, either during or following the action. Because abuse is pervasive in this culture, learning to heal from and integrate our traumatic experiences in action can empower us to live our lives more fully every day.

As we have already highlighted, a traumatic situation can affect different people in different ways. There are a wide range of symptoms associated with trauma sufferers, which is one

of the main reasons why it is often misdiagnosed. For the sufferer, the sooner these symptoms are identified and treatment sought, the quicker they are likely to improve, both personally and professionally.

So what are the trauma warning signs that you need to look out for?

- Nightmares
- Flashbacks and hallucinations
- Disturbed sleep
- Social and Emotional Withdrawal
- A Sense of having a foreshortened future
- Inability to concentrate
- Hyper vigilance

Individuals who experience trauma injury very often go on to develop

- Phobias/ Panic attacks
- Depression
- Increased Alcohol, Smoking and Drug Use
- Absenteeism
- Feelings of suicide and being unable to cope
- A sense of isolation

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 or making fun of it – “come on get over it!”

In the **immediate aftermath of a traumatic incident**,

1) Ask the affected person they’d like to go to a quieter space to talk about it. Don’t yank them away if they wish to remain connected to what is happening. But talking soon after the incident is one of the best ways we have of minimizing ongoing trauma. There is no need to dissect everything that happened at this stage but just listen.

2) Help them to reconnect with their affinity group, and to locate those they are concerned about. 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.

3) 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).

4) It goes without saying how important **deep listening** is. 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.’ Again, 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.

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

- ❖---- Eating nourishing food
- ❖---- Being physically active, as traumatic incidents can wash one’s body with

chemicals that need releasing through exercise

- ❖---- 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
- ❖---- Continuing to provide a listening ear
- ❖---- 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
- ❖---- 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.

Power With: Anti-Oppression Work in Our Movement

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 the struggle towards collective liberation and power

Remember this developing and anti-oppressive practice is a process and that life is profoundly complex and there are many contradictions. Our individual transformation and individual liberation is intimately interconnected with social transformation and social liberation. If we work with love, dignity and respect – our chances for positive change are greater especially when it is bumpy and difficult to navigate.

This information below is intended to help us be more conscious and provide tools to disrupt patterns of domination which hurt our movement and hurt each other. We all have a lot of work to do, but it is the kind of work that makes life worth living.

PRINCIPLES

1. Power and privilege can play out in our group dynamics and we must continually struggle with how we 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/racism, patriarchy/sexism, classism, heterosexism/homophobia, 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 can 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: Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address oppression head on.

- 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.
- Become a good listener, 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.
- Don't interrupt people who are speaking.
- Count how many times you speak and keep track of how long you speak.
- Count how many times other people speak and keep track of how long they speak.
- 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 speaking on every subject, speaking in capital letters, restating what others say or speaking for others. Practice "stepping up, stepping back" so we can each contribute to equal participation.
- Practice supporting people by asking them to expand on ideas and get more in-depth, before you decide to support the idea or not.
- It is the group's responsibility to challenge racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic remarks. Work collectively to insure that there is a balance race, gender and age participation and that people who haven't yet spoken get priority
- 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.
- Notice the work you take on is it: 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.

Voicing and Hearing Complaints

What works in voicing and hearing complaints:

Key principles:

- People who complain are great. Something 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 action s 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.

Individual Support Information
Confidential – Lawyer/Client Privileged

AG NAME: _____

Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Address:

NYC Address and
Contacts: _____

Social Security #: _____

Emergency Contact: (name, phone, and relationship) Do we call if you get arrested or just if there is a real emergency?

Medical Information: please identify any medical condition for which you need regular medication, any severe allergies, known pregnancy or any other condition for which you may need immediate medical attention. Will you be carrying medication with you? Is it in a prescription bottle?

Doctor/medical contact:

Other Issues: Transgendered, Not-US Citizen, Queer, Minor: that may increase your vulnerability?

Do you have previous arrests or outstanding warrants, traffic tickets etc?

General Support:

Who do we need to call at home or work? Do you h have children or pets that need attention?

Other:

AFFINITY GROUP SUPPORT FORM

Confidential – Lawyer/Client Privileged

-

AG

NAME: _____

AG Support Contact: _____
Phone: _____

AG Support Contact: _____
Phone: _____

Name: _____
Nickname: _____
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The following people have identified these vulnerabilities:

Medical:

Transgendered:

Queer:

Non Citizen:

Minor:

Previous Arrests/Warrants/Traffic Tickets:

Planning to Non-cooperate:

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:

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):	

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

GENERAL

RANT Collective Resources, www.rantcollective.org

ACT UP Civil Disobedience Handbook:

<http://www.actupny.org/documents/CDdocuments/CDindex.html>

Anarchism in Action: <http://www.radio4all.org/aia/>

Ruckus Training Manual: <http://ruckus.org/resources/manuals/actionplanning/index.html>

WRL Nonviolent Direct Action Handbook on line:

<http://members.tripod.com/SOAWatchLocal/LocalPages/handbook.htm#8>

LEGAL

New York Legal Information: <http://www.rncnotwelcome.org/legal.html>

Just Cause Law Collective, www.justcauselawcollective.org

Midnight Special Legal Collective, <http://www.midnightspecial.net/>

MEDICAL

Black Cross Collective: www.blackcross.org

Boston Area Liberation Medic (BALM) Squad www.bostoncoop.net/balm/

ANTI-OPPRESSION RESOURCES

Anarchist People of Color Tools, www.illegalvoices.org/apoc/heat/index.html

Colors of Resistance, www.tao.ca/~colours, www.tao.ca/~colours/org.html

Tools for Change, www.toolsforchange.org/resources/

CREATIVE ACTION: POLITICAL THEATRE, ART & PUPPETS

The Puppeteers' Cooperative Home Page, www.gis.net/~puppetco/index.html

Puppet Building and Building Materials, www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/building/index.html

Wise Fool Basics Puppet Handbook, www.zeitgeist.net/wfca/handbook.html

Progressive Austin's chants and slogans, www.progressiveaustin.org/chants.htm

Art and Revolution, www.artandrevolution.net