

## Sample Nonviolent Direct Action Training Agenda, 4 hours

Goals of the Preps: Quickly orient people to practical street action techniques as well as critical thinking about nonviolent direct action.

I. 10 **Opening role play scenario:** Quickly put people into an action role-play, such as bus of delegates is heading toward their meeting site, what do we do?

- Purpose: throws them into the prep right away
- Gives both group and preparers a sense of the group's background

II. 10 **Intros & debrief** on role-play: Preparers introduce themselves, then have people go around and introduce themselves and how the role-play felt. Expect some fear, confusion, etc. Explain what today's prep will cover, how being prepared for this scenario would make it different. Review agenda, emphasizing what other pres will cover that cannot be covered here.

III. 10 **Active listening dyads:** Pair people up and have one person in pair talk for 2 minutes w/o interruption about, "What does non-violent direct action (NVDA) mean to you, and why would you choose to use it or not to use it?" have the other person mirror back what they heard, allowing first person to make corrections & clarifications. Switch. Keep to time.

- Purpose: to get people thinking & defining NVDA for each other
- Also to practice active listening, debrief on why this is a useful skill in an action context

IV. 30 **Spectrogram:** Explain that one side of the room is violent and one side is non-violent, and there is a lot of room in between the two. Tell them to go stand where they think the following scenario falls in terms of  $v > nv$ . Then, when they are positioned, tell them the other axis is 'would do it, would not do it', and go stand where they want on that perpendicular axis. Have a few people say why they are where they are. People can reposition themselves during the debrief if they change their minds. Try the following scenarios: paying taxes, eating meat, pieing someone, blocking hotel doors, breaking corporations window, crowd pushing back a police line.

- Debrief: What did you get out of this? What do we do with this knowledge? (Expect acknowledgement that there is a great diversity of opinion and possible action, that even things we think are non-violent, others react to as violent, and note that what our audience thinks is part of having an effective action).
- Present action guidelines, stressing that this is what the INPEG has consensed to for this action.

V. 10 **History of NVDA:** have people brainstorm on different things.

VI. 20 **Hassle lines:** Explain what for & how to do, ground rules, that this is a verbal exercise not a physical one. Have people switch both roles and partners between each one. Debrief after each side of the lines has played both roles of a particular hassle line. Scenarios: blockading an angry IMF delegate, corporate media interviews, dealing with a fellow protestor bringing a burning dumpster into an intersection where your affinity group is locked down.

•••••••• Debrief on body language, what worked and didn't work, what was hard, what the other person did you thought was effective.

Focus on posture – planting feet solidly, holding hands open and in front, moderating level of voice, eye contact etc.

Understanding how people have a certain spatial boundary, how we can use that by standing our ground and then moving slowly, non-aggressively forward into theirs in order to get them to move.

15 MINUTE BREAK

VII. 25 **Power analysis & going limp**

•••••••• Power Analysis: (see first section of CD Training agenda)

•••••••• If it works for you talk about 3 kinds of power that exist--power-over (dominating exercises of power, power with (the power we have together), and power from within (our spirit, energy, beliefs). (I skipped this...Brainstorm: how does power-over maintain? How is power kept from us? How is it enforced? How do we allow it to be exercised? How do we reclaim power?

•••••••• Bring this into discussing different types of resistance and non-cooperation: respecting individual choices, why might someone choose to cooperate physically or not with the arrest process? Stress the importance of not making judgements about what people choose.

•••••••• Have group practice staying tense or going limp during arrest in groups of 3 or 4. Discuss pain holds.

VIII. 10 **Affinity groups:** Define, roles, explain as useful for support and that they are the basic decision-making group for the action.

IX. 20 **Consensus:** Quick explanation of flowchart hand-out, then break people into affinity groups of 5-6 people and do a quick decision role-play: “You are locked down in a key intersection. You hear that the police are coming your way with tear gas cannons. What are you going to do? You have 5 minutes to decide.” Debrief after on what each group decided, and then ask them to reflect on the process. Did someone step in to facilitate? How did that get decided? Who spoke and didn't speak? Did you play the role you normally do in groups? Consider pushing yourself to play a different role – i.e. speak more if you're usually quiet, hold back if you normally take control.

X. 25 **Crowd solidarity tactics:** Trainers play cops. Have group standing to one side of room.

Also can demonstrate with small group...

- Police slowly rush crowd, moving them back. See how crowd responds. If they choose to stay, show how much stronger they are sitting down, how problems are more visible.
- Having protestors link arms along sides of marches to prevent police from grabbing people.
- Blockades: linking arms (hands grasping wrists is strongest hold, using legs to link to people in front of you, linking then laying back, closing open spaces so people cannot walk through, knowing who to communicate and when to let go of someone next to you.....
- Humming & pointing to bring focus to troubled areas.
- Amoebas to pull targeted people back in the crowd.
- Puppy piles to protect targeted people.
- How to isolate provocateurs but surrounding them with several people with linked arms who can walk them away from the group.
- Discuss moving closer together, sitting if there are horses, not looking at or interacting with police dogs,
- How to protect against tear gas and pepper spray, and deal with other concerns that come up. Specific mention of dangers to people with asthma and contact lens, needing to flush system of toxins, get people to a medical training!
- How to protect your body...fold thumbs into fist, put over head, lay in fetal position (curl up into a ball) on right side to protect liver

XI. 25 **Mass role-play:** Put people back into affinity groups. Tell them we are going to block a hotel where delegates are trying to get in. Their AG must quickly decide upon an action. Send a spokes to a fishbowl ( mini-spokes council, and then do the action. Have media, provocateurs, mean cops, demonstrator who flips out ... etc. Play and debrief what we learned.

XII. 30 **Evaluating prep,** parting words on health and safety, etc. Do affinity group formation with all who may need it. Try quick go-around on kind of action/location of action people want to do, role they are thinking of taking, see if you can group into affinity, and encourage them to keep meeting after prep is over.

Trainings can also include a review of the action plan and legal information if there is time.....