

2016 SAVE THE KIDS ORGANIZER'S MANUAL



www.savethekidsgroup.org

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PART I.

ABOUT STK

1. HISTORY OF SAVE THE KIDS

Save the Kids (STK) emerged in the summer of 2009 out of Outdoor Empowerment (OE), a nonprofit established in 2005. Save the Kids National was established in August 2011.

Syracuse Save the Kids and Save the Kids National are two different organizations, which separated in 2011. Syracuse Save the Kids claimed the 501 c 3 of Outdoor Empowerment, and ended its activities in 2012. Save the Kids National is a grassroots, fully-volunteer organization without a nonprofit government status.

In 2009, four African-American youth (Jason, Ali, Jarir, and Aound) in Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center chose “Save the Kids” and its mission, while participating in a group discussion about the need for an organization to keep them from being trapped in the juvenile justice system. They needed, as one kid stated, “to be saved instead of thrown away as trash.” That statement speaks volumes.

STK does not claim to have all the answers, nor are we outsiders coming in to “save” anyone. We are individuals who have and had family members incarcerated in youth detention facilities and/or adult prisons and jails. We are made up of formerly incarcerated youth and adults, judges, lawyers, detention staff and administration, youth advocates, teachers, and mentors.

2. FOCUS

Save the Kids focuses on supporting all oppressed youth, but specifically four groups that are the most targeted and stigmatized by the school and juvenile justice systems – (1) Youth of Color, (2) Youth with Disabilities, (3) LGBTTTQQIA Youth, and (4) Youth who are economically disadvantaged.

3. MISSION STATEMENT

Save the Kids (STK) is a fully-volunteer national grass-roots organization dedicated to alternatives to and the end of incarceration of all youth and the school to prison pipeline.

4. SLOGAN

Listen. Educate. Agitate. Transform.

The meaning of the slogan is directly connected to the programs we have.

Listen is Education Behind the Walls. Educate is the Public Education Forums. Agitate is the Activism. Transform is our goal for the education, criminal and juvenile justice systems.

5. PROBLEMS

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE

- Unhealthy Food and Environmental Pollution is the addiction of drugs and alcohol, lack of a balanced diet, healthy food, parks, nature, and clean air and water for those that are economically disadvantaged.
- Economic Poverty, Lack of Social Resources, and Access to Politics is the socio-political and economic systematic marginalization and effort to oppress a group of people so they lack quality shelter, transportation, voting rights, policy-making, community centers, museums, theaters, libraries, hospitals, schools, technology, and trash and sewage disposal.

- Repression of Culture and Identity of marginalized groups of people, which do not allow them to have the freedom to express or practice who they are.

SCHOOL PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE

- Oppressive Monolithic Education is the curriculum, pedagogy, and practices that promote and are grounded in the dominant identity and culture.
- Punitive Discipline of Youth is the punishment of youth which includes detention, sitting in the hall or corner, involuntary labor, and in and out of school suspension.
- Non-Diverse, Under-educated or Non-Representative Personnel is the overwhelming number of employees in both the juvenile justice and school systems that do not relate, understand, or identify with marginalized identities.

JUVENILE JUSTICE PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE

- Criminalization of Youth is the stigmatization of youth through laws and norms that are based on their behavior, dress, ability, socializing, identity, and community in which they live in.
- Policing of Youth is the surveillance and social control of youth by law enforcement and those in disciplinary roles.
- Incarceration of Youth is the punitive disciplinary act that is taken by the criminal justice system if a youth breaks the law and is found guilty.

6. SOLUTIONS

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE

- Food and Environmental Justice to develop farmers markets, community cooking classes, urban gardens, development of parks and natural spaces, healthy food kitchens and food-banks, clean air and water, and environmentally sustainable and healthy buildings, factories, and businesses.
- End of Oppression will systematically eliminate barriers, disadvantages, and unearned privileges, along with ending domination and supremacy.
- Community Building is critical in creating an alternative and safe(r) place to foster a non-dominate narrative of collective memory and experience that is built by members of the effected community and not by nonprofits, government, or other outside entities. Community building is inclusive, self-determining, autonomous, and based on freedom to express one's identity and to practice one's culture without limitation or silencing.

SCHOOL SOLUTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE

- Social Justice Inclusive Liberation Education challenges monolithic high-stakes, standardized, segregated, corporate education that uses social control by punitive discipline, and advocates for liberation emancipation, and empowerment, based on interdependence.

This type of education is essential to be trained to staff and teachers and implemented in the curriculum for addressing the needs of diverse cultures and for emancipating internalized oppression.

- Conflict Transformation is based on building people up in a voluntary transformative collaborative interpersonal communal process to address harms and conflicts. Schools and education should not be a place or experience based on fear and punishment, but one that is based on transformation, learning, and liberation.
- Equity is the required principle to ensure that all youth are given what they need from teachers, staff, administration, and resources within the school and juvenile justice systems; rather than being marginalized, stigmatized, and criminalized by outsiders who do not relate to the youth they serve because of socio-political factors, economics, or identity. Another important issue is addressing the barriers that limit this issue for being possible such as class size, funding, number of staff and teachers, number of students in a school, and adequate food and transportation.

JUVENILE JUSTICE SOLUTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE

- Hip Hop Activism privileges youth expression and culture rather than stigmatizing/criminalizing youth.
- Support Groups will eliminate the external third party need to secure and surveil those in the communities that are needing guidance, accountability, mentoring, advising, counseling, and interventions.
- Transformative Justice is a holistic, voluntary, liberatory, community-based justice system that wants to abolish prisons and punitive justice, while respecting individual's identity and experiences. This would include ending suspensions, detention, SROs/police in schools, involuntary labor, shaming, and stigmatizing and punitive rules and discipline.

TEN POINT PRINCIPLES

1. We believe that all youth need support, love, and skills in order to achieve their goals.
2. We believe that all youth are amazing and wonderful, no matter the actions they have committed.
3. We make a clear distinction between actions and youth; actions can be bad, but not youth.
4. We are committed to helping youth because they are our future and if we do not help them, we will not have one.
5. We believe in respecting all genders, disabilities, races, economic statuses, sexualities, religions, ethnicities, ages, or nationalities.
6. As a Hip Hop activist organization, we work towards both social justice and the end of all forms of oppression and domination, specifically the school-to-prison pipeline.

7. As an organization based on transformative justice principles, we strive to promote and analyze alternatives to incarceration, such as community-based programs, rather than institutionalization.
8. We believe in peace and nonviolence in resolving and transforming all conflicts.
9. We reject the stigma created by labeling and are inclusive in all of our activities.
10. We promote interdependence, that everyone in the community should work together in making a peaceful world and not to exclude anyone. STK will work with everyone and anyone in order to achieve that goal.

WHAT SAVE THE KIDS IS NOT

1. Many people ask if we are religious because of “Save” in our name. We are not religiously affiliated.
2. We are not a nonprofit or a 501 c 3 because we do not believe that it takes money to make change and we critique the nonprofit industrial complex that surrounds services for youth. This prevents us from accepting money from corporations, governments, or foundations. We can only accept money from individuals.
3. We do not provide mentoring to youth, we provide empowerment through friendships with youth. To do mentoring one should have insurance and be incorporated. There are many nonprofits providing this service, so we do not want to duplicate services within the community.
4. We do not work with all youth. We only work with youth that are targets of or currently in the juvenile justice system.
5. We are not a reformist organization in relation to schools and the juvenile justice system.
6. We do not work on “violence prevention,” “anti-bullying,” “cultural competence,” or “closing the academic achievement gap.” These are reformist initiatives that put blame on the youth and do not address larger systematic forms of socio-political and economic oppression rooted in sexism, ageism, racism, anti-LGBTQQIA, ableism, and classism.

PART II.

STK STRUCTURE

9. CHAPTER PROGRAMS

1. Education Behind the Walls

1. Facilitate youth workshops in juvenile detention facilities that focus on group-building skills, expressive skills, and life skills.

2. Activism

1. Protest at court or police Station against the incarceration of all youth
2. protest at a school district office against punitive justice, zero tolerance, and SROs in schools

3. Public Education Forums

1. Public Education Forum on the School to Prison Pipeline and Transformative Justice
2. Hip Hop Revolutionary Education Show for Community, Families, and Youth

4. Administrative

1. Chapter Monthly Meetings (in-person or via conference call)
2. Chapter Representative attends national conference calls, contacts, and maintains social media

10. CHAPTER PROGRAM MATERIALS

1. Tabling and Public Education Forums: Table Cloths for tabling, literature, books, donation bucket, sign-up sheet, clip board, STK banner vinyl banner, tape, pens, markers, crates.
2. Activism: Banners, posters, megaphone, marshal vests, chalk, noise makers, flashlights, paint, and sound system.
3. Education Behind the Walls: Balls, cards, string, HIPP and AVP manual, other group building manuals, chart paper, tape, markers, cups, plates, colored paper, blank white paper, chess, checkers, index cards, sticky notes, lined paper, pencils, Poetry Behind the Walls contracts, ties to learn how to tie a tie, life skills how to books, coloring books, radio for games, blocks, tinker toys, puzzles, and buckets and drum sticks.

11. NATIONAL PROGRAMS

1. Annual National Week of Action Against Incarcerating Youth is always a week in May that includes May 17 and May 19.
2. Poetry Behind the Walls is one of the only book series that is dedicated to incarcerated youth.
3. Wisdom Behind the Walls is writing by adults in prison that provide advice to youth that are targets of the juvenile justice system.

4. Annual International Hip Hop Activism Conference is an annual conference bringing together Hip Hop politics and activism.
5. National Campaigns are strategic initiatives on a particular issue that all chapters focus on together for social change.
6. Annual Anarchism, Crime, and Justice Conference is a conference once a year dedicated to alternative forms of justice that are not punitive or retributive.

12. VOLUNTEER

If you would like to volunteer with Save the Kids, visit our website (www.savethekidsgroup.org) and contact the chapter, program, or project you would like to get involved with.

13. BECOME A PARTNER

1. Are you a community-based grass-roots organization (501c3 or otherwise) that wants to work with fellow social and youth justice organizations dedicated to ending the incarceration of youth and the school to prison pipeline?
2. Do you agree with STK's principles and engage in similar tactics for social change?

If you say YES to these questions, please contact us and let's make this movement bigger and more united!

14. START A STK CHAPTER

1. Have you been involved with STK as an intern or volunteer, or are you dedicated to keeping youth out of incarceration or ending the school to prison pipeline?
2. Do you agree with STK's mission, purpose, principles, programs, and projects?
3. Are you dedicated to prison abolition, transformative justice, and Hip Hop activism? If so, we would be very interested in working with you in developing a chapter in your city/region or at your school/college.

15. CHAPTER ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

1. Each chapter is fully-volunteer and grassroots, not a nonprofit with paid employees.
2. Each chapter must have at least four people actively involved.
3. Promote the chapter via social networks and media with contact information on all events, programs, projects, and social media.
4. All funding must be by individuals, not by grants or government agencies.
5. All events must be free and open to all, while donations are accepted and benefit events are encouraged.

6. All chapters use the consensus decision-making process.
7. All chapters have monthly meetings.
8. All chapters have at least one event per month.
9. All chapters must have a Representative to participate in monthly national conference calls.
10. While all individuals are invited and welcome to STK, each chapter should strive to have leadership and membership that are People of Color and Black Americans.
11. Each chapter should strive to organize around all three STK Programs – Activism, Public Education Forums, and Juvenile Detention Facility Youth Workshops.
12. STK is community-empowerment based and not dedicated to legislation or reform.
13. STK engages with transformative justice (prison abolition) for the purpose of creating an alternative to punitive justice and the current U.S. juvenile and criminal injustice systems.
14. STK engages with Hip Hop activism for the purpose of engaging youth and discussing social problems.
15. All chapters embrace a grass-roots approach (making something from nothing) to demonstrate that even a person with very few resources and abilities can foster change.
16. All chapters are created by and with the community, rather than imposing a chapter on the community.
17. All events are free (donations welcome), accessible, open to all ages, sober, drug- and smoke-free, security-free, and serve healthy food (when applicable).
18. Each chapter should have a contact phone number, e-mail, social media (Facebook, twitter, etc.), and listserv for organizing.

16. CHAPTER ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONS

1. Coordinator of Public Education Forums Committee: Organizes workshops, panels, and conferences, along with tabling at events.
2. Coordinator and Committee of Activism Committee: Organizes protests.
3. Coordinator of Education Behind the Walls Committee: Organizes youth detention facility workshops by recruiting volunteers and being the liaison between STK and the facility.
4. Regional Chapter Representative and Coordinator of the Administrative Committee: Facilitates and organizes regional monthly meetings. Informs chapter of national events and programs, and attends national monthly meetings via Skype or conference call.

PART III.

STK CODE OF CONDUCT

17. COORDINATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I have read, understand, and share STK's values, strategy, and mission.
2. I will promote STK and be transparent with my work with other agencies and organizations, in order to avoid conflict of interest and inform other agencies and organizations of my work with STK.
3. I will purchase STK clothing and wear it to all STK events and whenever I am representing STK publically.
4. I will study the theories and practices underlying STK's work, including these two books: "From Education to Incarceration," and "Educating for Action."
5. I accept that conflict is inherent and provides opportunity. I will examine all conflicts, understand if the conflict is based on interest or position, understand who else might be affected, and finally look at creative constructive, transformative, holistic methods of addressing the conflict in private and in person if possible, or in a community circle with those affected.
6. I will use STK equipment only for STK sponsored/co-sponsored events. All equipment is accounted for and if a chapter closes all equipment will be given to national coordinators to manage and give to chapters in need.
7. I will apply principles of non-authoritarian and inclusive practices and safe(r) space in organizing (such as marshaling and facilitating events), to make sure that we prioritize the participation of marginalized people such as youth, children, mothers, People of Color, and those with disabilities.
8. I will not attach STK's name or activities to other groups/nonprofits/coalitions without strategic purpose and group consensus, established in advance via meeting or social media polling of STK leaders.
9. I will use positive, constructive language within STK, and commit to monitoring my own speech for bias, prejudice, and violence.
10. I will accept feedback to the best of my ability, ask clarifying questions if I don't understand, and self-reflect. I will ask for others to be my sounding board, but will refrain from gossip and other destructive communications.
11. I will follow all security culture protocol including, but not limited to keeping sensitive information like contact information and campaign strategies private and not shared with those outside of the organization. I will keep my phone, computer, and all other information locked. I will be transparent about my identity and where I grew up and request that from others in the organization. I will not snitch, aid in divisive behavior, or communicate with law enforcement which will risk arrest of someone. I will not put myself in a position to cause others to be arrested because of my behaviors or possessions. I will not point out or indicate leaders unless they are wishing to be identified as such. Finally, I will not promote rumors or hear say or speak about people behind their back.

18. GROUND RULES

1. Volunteer Yourself Only
2. No put downs of yourself or others, even in a joking way.
3. One Mic (one person speaks at a time)
4. Vegas (whatever said in a space stays with those people)
5. Participate
6. Step up, step down (privileged voices speak less, marginalized voices speak more)
7. 3 then me (do not speak until at least three people speak)
8. K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short and Sweet)
9. Keep an open mind
10. Assume the best
11. Don't yuck on my yum (do not put down something someone else personally likes)
12. Don't take anything personal
13. Attack the idea not the person
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____

19. WORKING TO BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH OPPRESSED PEOPLE

1. Be invited to the struggle not movement
2. Listen.
3. Articulate one's commitment.
4. Explain one's skills.
5. Explain motivation and personal goals.
6. Be willing to follow and never lead.
7. Be willing to not get credit, but give credit to non-dominate voices.

8. Be willing to take accountability and own one's supremacy and domination.
9. Be willing to be challenged and be called out.
10. Be willing to learn new processes and cultural practices.
11. Be willing to take more risks.
12. Be willing to do more.
13. Be willing to not take money or other benefits
14. Challenge acts by white individuals and agencies that tokenize, patronize, and co-opt.
15. Be willing to leave and not blame other.

20. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION FORUMS AND ACTIVISM

1. Volunteers have read, understand, and share STK's values and mission.
2. Volunteers must be sober while participating in STK activities.
3. Volunteers will not bring to or promote drugs, weapons, alcohol, or any other illegal substances at STK events.
4. Volunteers will not use physical violence or verbal oppression, including bad language, insults, or discriminating terms at STK programs, events, or while organizing with STK (including on social media).
5. Volunteers will not use gang symbols or wear gang items at programs or events.
6. Volunteers commit to respectful speech, no interrupting/cutting off people who are speaking, and commit to compassionate and helpful behavior to the best of their ability.
7. Volunteers commit to making every place a safe space, free of sexual conduct, hitting on, hooking up, or sexual engagement of any kind.
8. Volunteers will represent STK professionally and legally in the community.
9. Volunteers will contact STK event organizers in advance if they are not able to attend events/volunteer shifts.
10. Volunteers will not use STK activities/events to build personal romantic relationships with insiders, facilities staff or fellow STK volunteers.

21. EDUCATION BEHIND THE WALLS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Volunteers will not engage in personal communication with incarcerated insiders, will not take anything into or out of detention facilities for insiders or facility staff.

2. Volunteers will not contact the family or friends of juvenile insiders, or use their names in anyway (e.g., e-mail, text message, phone, or in person) outside of the detention facility.
3. Volunteers will practice privacy in all meetings at detention facilities and at all volunteer/staff meetings, with the exception of reporting violent, harmful, discriminating, or other illegal conduct that is overheard or known to be taking place. Incidents, threats and/or rumors must be brought to detention center staff.
4. Volunteers will give one week (7 days) notice for canceling any EBW obligation. Failure to do so will result in suspension or dismissal.
5. Volunteers will not miss more than once a month in the detention facility. After two missed shifts, the volunteer will be dismissed.
6. Crew neck shirts or t-shirts, preferably a STK shirt.
7. No shirts with any symbols on them
8. No V-cut shirts.
9. No leggings or tight fitted pants.
10. Loose fitting pants only with no rips.
11. No shorts.
12. No jewelry: ear rings, watches, bracelets, necklaces, etc. are allowed.
13. Nothing in pockets: wallets, phones, money, pens, keys, etc. are allowed.
14. No open toed shoes, high-heels, or boots, preferably sneakers.
15. No hoodies.
16. No hats or caps.
17. No ties.
18. No chewing gum.
19. No candy.

PART IV.

ORGANIZING

21. TWENTY STEP PROCESS FOR ORGANIZING A PUBLIC EDUCATION FORUM

1. Pick an event theme with a title and a description.
2. Establish an event committee of 2 to 3 people and sponsors.
3. Establish a length of time such as 1 hour, 3 hour, day long, weekend long, week long and format of the event such as, workshop, roundtable, teach-in, Skype, film screening, lecture, debate, open mic, or conference.
4. Invite and confirm speakers on the topic from the community, universities, schools, and other institutions/organizations.
5. Receive biographies, professional titles, and full name of the speakers.
6. Lock in a location and time that is accessible and in a location that the public can easily find. Think about the bus schedule and parking situation.
7. Develop a flyer and send it out to the event committee, speakers, and sponsors for approval.
8. Promote and advertise through e-mail, media (such as radio and newspapers), Facebook, Twitter, blogs, phone-calls, speaking in classrooms and organizations, and texting.
9. The day and week of the event, re-promote.
10. The day and week of the event, re-confirm speakers.
11. An hour before the event, make sure all the event committee members are at the event location on time.
12. An hour before the event, organize chairs, food, video camera, banners, and a STK information table.
13. An hour before the event, the co-facilitators should practice explaining the purpose of the event, STK's mission, and presenters' bios.
14. An hour before the event, the co-facilitators should decide how the discussion will be facilitated after the presenters are finished. If possible, call on people with marginalized identities, try not to call on the same person more than once, and do not allow anyone to speak for an excessively long period of time.
15. Make sure the event starts and end on time.
16. Make sure to thank everyone for presenting, organizing, attending, etc.
17. Make sure to tell everyone about the next event or to tell them where to find out about future events.
18. Make sure to tell people how to get involved with STK.

19. Make sure to send out, via social media and e-mails, thank yous to those who attended.

20. Make sure to quickly post pictures and videos of the event on social media.

22. SOCIAL MEDIA DESIGNS

Twitter Profile Header: 1500px by 500px

Facebook header: 851px by 315px

Facebook Personal Image: 180px by 180px; Shows up as 160px by 160px

23. GANDHI'S FOUR STEPS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."
influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer, quote:

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

1. Ignore You
2. Stigmatize You
3. Repress You
4. Accept You

24. DR. MARTIN L. KING JR.'S SIX STEPS OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

The Six Steps for Nonviolent Social Change are based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns and teachings that emphasize love in action. Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence, as reviewed in the Six Principles of Nonviolence, guide these steps for social and interpersonal change.

1. **INFORMATION GATHERING:** To understand and articulate an issue, problem or injustice facing a person, community, or institution you must do research. You must investigate and gather all vital information from all sides of the argument or issue so as to increase your understanding of the problem. You must become an expert on your opponent's position.
2. **EDUCATION:** It is essential to inform others, including your opposition, about your issue. This minimizes misunderstandings and gains you support and sympathy.
3. **PERSONAL COMMITMENT:** Daily check and affirm your faith in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Eliminate hidden motives and prepare yourself to accept suffering, if necessary, in your work for justice.
4. **DISCUSSION/NEGOTIATION:** Using grace, humor and intelligence, confront the other party with a list of injustices and a plan for addressing and resolving these injustices. Look for what is positive in every action and statement the opposition makes. Do not seek to humiliate the opponent but to call forth the good in the opponent.

5. **DIRECT ACTION:** These are actions taken when the opponent is unwilling to enter into, or remain in, discussion/negotiation. These actions impose a "creative tension" into the conflict, supplying moral pressure on your opponent to work with you in resolving the injustice.

6. **RECONCILIATION:** Nonviolence seeks friendship and understanding with the opponent. Nonviolence does not seek to defeat the opponent. Nonviolence is directed against evil systems, forces, oppressive policies, unjust acts, but not against persons. Through reasoned compromise, both sides resolve the injustice with a plan of action. Each act of reconciliation is one step close to the 'Beloved Community.'

Based on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in Why We Can't Wait, Penguin Books, 1963.

We often view the Six Steps as a phases or cycles of a campaign rather than steps because each of them embodies a cluster or series of activities related to each of the other five elements.

25. SAMPLE TEXT FOR FORUM POLICY SPACE STATEMENT

Sample Text for Forum Policy Space Statements:

Safer Space Policy: The Anarchism, Crime, and Justice Conference promotes a safer space in which all must feel welcome, supported, and secure. No one should endorse or tolerate racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQQIA sentiments, ableism, speciesism, or any other kind of oppressive behavior.

Sober Space Policy: We encourage a sober space as well, so please do not drink, shoot, or inhale intoxicants into your body closely before or while in attendance at the conference.

Inclusive Space Policy: All rooms and bathrooms are accessible. Please avoid wearing fragrances or strong scents, as the odors may cause allergic reactions. If you have any requests for assistance such as a translator, note taker, medication, childcare, or physical accessibility, please let us know by e-mailing _____. (We understand this conference is not fully inclusive because of cost, but we do want to address these issues as they are needed to confront ableism).

26. MINI-WORKSHOP FOR EDUCATION BEHIND THE WALLS

2 to 3 Hour Mini-Workshop			
Part. 1 Experiential Education			
Time	#	Activity	Facilitator's Name
	1	Welcoming of the volunteers and Save the Kids - Pass out balls - Discuss ground-rules of respect	
	2	Go around question	
	3	Activity with balls	
	4	High impact activity	
	5	Critical thinking visual activity	
	6	Low impact activity	
Part 2. Expressive Education			
	7	Introduction of Poetry Behind the Walls	
	8	Write poetry	
	9	Sign contracts	
	10	Read out loud poetry on a voluntary basis	
	11	High energy activity	
	12	Handouts	
	13	Evaluation go around (what you liked)	
	14	Closing go around	

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

1st Annual Anarchism, Crime, and Justice Conference at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, USA

THEME:

Prison Abolition, Transformative Justice, and Fighting Repression

March 26 and 27, 2016

DESCRIPTION

Activists and scholars working within the realm of challenging the current punitive criminal justice system are welcome to submit for the 1st annual Anarchist Criminology Conference. This conference is structured around challenging and abolishing punitive justice, while promoting community-based alternatives such as restorative justice, transformative justice and Hip Hop battling. This conference welcomes all those interested in providing performances, workshops, lecturers, teach-ins, roundtables, and film screenings. Topics of interest include prison abolition, prisoner support, critiques of political repression, police abolition, de-colonialism, abolition of zero tolerance policies and the school to prison pipeline, all forms of academic repression, corporate repression, state terrorism, all things pertaining to youth justice, total liberation, intersectionality, horizontalism, LGBTTTQQIA, mutual aid, disability liberation, Black liberation, indigenous sovereignty, racial justice, animal liberation, environmental justice, green anarchism, anarchism, and justice. This conference also welcomes all forms of art and music for social justice such as Hip Hop activism.

SUBMISSIONS

To submit your presentation for this conference please send the following information in a Word Doc. Title, 80 to 100 word third person biography in a paragraph, and a 150 to 200 word abstract.

Please send all information as an attachment via e-mail to: anarchistcriminology@gmail.com

DEADLINE

The deadline to submit materials for a presentation at the conference is February 11, 2016. You will know if you were accepted to present by February 15, 2016.

PART V.

SECURITY CULTURE

28. SECURITY CULTURE 101

1. Keep your computer, home, office, locker, phone, tablet, vehicles, etc. always locked, organized, and clean so if someone was to enter your home you would likely know.
2. Don't brag about your or other's activism, especially illegal activity, if to family, friends, partners, or other people that have done time.
3. Only do civil disobedience and other illegal activism with people you know very well including where they grew up, work, went to school, and currently live and who their friends and family are.
4. Don't joke or speak about illegal activities. This will aid in spot lighting more attention onto you from law enforcement.
5. Use encrypted software and shorthand communication beyond just writing to protect what you or others are planning.
6. Develop methods in nominations of people into a collective, group, or project to establish one's level of safety and security.
7. Strive to build trust based on honesty and building an open relationship.
8. Don't ask others about their involvement with illegal action.
9. Don't date people or do actions with people you are dating. This will possible increase the complexity of risk that is taking place.
10. Strive to never have a paper trail of your activism that is illegal such as not typing on a computer, e-mail, or piece of paper.
11. Have your meetings in a secure and non-survivaied location.
12. Do not promote or support rumors about anything about anyone. Strive to end them or address them quickly and efficiently.
13. Minimize on internalized social movement politics, which aids in information gathering of law enforcement, which could be used against activists.
14. Avoid working with people you don't like rather than publicizing your dislike of them.
15. No your legal/illegal limits based on job, friends, children, family, organization(s), and movement.
16. Respect and learn each individual's security expectations and obi by them.
17. Leave no trace, meaning leave nothing in your home, car, on your phone, computer, or drop anything at events or locations that might aid in incarceration or information gathering of you or others.

18. All messages with the organization including listserves, board-members, volunteers, and coordinators, directors, and social media messages should have the following note at the bottom of all messages discussing events, programs, projects, and general information about the group. All messages about the group should be private and should not be forwarded or discussed with others:

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This communication (including any attachments) is intended only for the use of the intended recipient and may contain information that is privileged and confidential. This communication along with all verbal, social media, and digital communication about all STK business and STK volunteers is private and not to be shared or discussed visually, forwarded, verbally or digitally with others such as friends, family, or members of STK. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use, dissemination, forwarding, distribution, or copying of the communication is strictly prohibited. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this communication in error and delete this e-mail and all copies of this email from your system. Thank you.

29. WHAT IS SECURITY CULTURE?: A GUIDE TO STAYING SAFE

by Sprout Anarchist Collective

Intro

This is a reprint of a guide called “What is Security Culture?” published by the CrimethInc collective. As far as we know, it first appeared in their book *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook* and then appeared in a slightly updated form in 2009 on their website, Crimethinc.com.

We’re reprinting this because the information contained within cannot be shared enough within our communities. Over the past several years, we’ve seen various instances of anarchists getting serious federal charges. Eric McDavid was entrapped by a federal informant — Anna — with whom he hatched a plot to blow up a dam and was later sentenced to several years in prison. At the 2008 protests against the Republican National Convention (RNC), several folks were entrapped by federal informants — Bradley Crowder, David McKay, and Matthew Depalma. While one certainly can’t say that more easily accessible information on security culture would have prevented these situations, it seems that the more widely available the information is the safer we will all be.

We chose to reprint this guide specifically because it focuses on general principles — rather than specific tactics — necessary to building secure communities of resistance. Please read this guide, share it, enact these principles in your life, and explain them to people who aren’t familiar with them. Most importantly, please, please take security culture seriously.

Finally, folks would also do well to do some additional research on the subject of social networking and computer security. As computers dominate more and more of our lives, it is important that folks think about the risks that their use can pose for those in conflict with the state.

30. WHAT IS SECURITY CULTURE?

by Love and Rage

A security culture is a set of customs shared by a community whose members may be targeted by the government, designed to minimize risk.

Having a security culture in place saves everyone the trouble of having to work out safety measures over and over from scratch, and can help offset paranoia and panic in stressful situations—hell, it

might keep you out of prison, too. The difference between protocol and culture is that culture becomes unconscious, instinctive, and thus effortless; once the safest possible behavior has become habitual for everyone in the circles in which you travel, you can spend less time and energy emphasizing the need for it, or suffering the consequences of not having it, or worrying about how much danger you're in, as you'll know you're already doing everything you can to be careful. If you're in the habit of not giving away anything sensitive about yourself, you can collaborate with strangers without having to agonize about whether or not they are informers; if everyone knows what not to talk about over the telephone, your enemies can tap the line all they want and it won't get them anywhere.

The central principle of all security culture, the point that cannot be emphasized enough, is that people should never be privy to any sensitive information they do not need to know.

The greater the number of people who know something that can put individuals or projects at risk—whether that something be the identity of a person who committed an illegal act, the location of a private meeting, or a plan for future activity—the more chance there is of the knowledge getting into the wrong hands. Sharing such information with people who do not need it does them a disservice as well as the ones it puts at risk: it places them in the uncomfortable situation of being able to mess up other people's lives with a single misstep. If they are interrogated, for example, they will have something to hide, rather than being able to honestly claim ignorance.

Don't ask, don't tell.

Don't ask others to share confidential information you don't need to know. Don't brag about illegal things you or others have done, or mention things that are going to happen or might happen, or even refer to another person's interest in being involved in such activities. Stay aware whenever you speak; don't let chance allusions drop out thoughtlessly.

You can say "no" at any time to anyone about anything.

Don't answer any questions you don't want to—not just with police officers, but also with other activists and even close friends: if there's something you don't feel safe sharing, don't. This also means being comfortable with others not answering questions: if there's a conversation they want to keep to themselves, or they ask you not to be part of a meeting or project, you shouldn't take this personally—it's for everyone's good that they're free to do so. Likewise, don't participate in any projects you don't feel good about, or collaborate with anyone you feel ill at ease with, or ignore your gut feeling in any situation; if something goes wrong and you get into trouble, you don't want to have any regrets. You're responsible for not letting anyone talk you into taking risks you're not ready for.

Don't ever turn your friends over to your enemies.

If captured, never, ever give up any information that could endanger anyone else. Some recommend an explicit oath be sworn by all participants in a direct action group: that way, in a worst-case scenario, when pressure might make it hard to distinguish between giving up a few harmless details and totally selling out, everyone will know exactly what commitments they made to each other.

Don't make it too easy for your enemies to figure out what you're up to.

Don't be too predictable in the methods you employ, or the targets you choose, or the times and places you meet to discuss things. Don't be too visible in the public aspects of the struggle in which you do your most serious direct action: keep your name off mailing lists and out of the media, perhaps

avoid association with aboveground organizations and campaigns entirely. If you're involved in really serious clandestine activities with a few comrades, you may want to limit your interactions in public, if not avoid each other altogether. Federal agents can easily get access to the phone numbers dialed from your phone, and will use such lists to establish connections between individuals; the same goes for your email, and the books you check out from libraries, and especially social networking sites like Facebook.

Don't leave a trail: credit card use, gas cards, cell phone calls all leave a record of your motions, purchases, and contacts. Have a cover story, supported by verifiable facts, if you might need one. Be careful about what your trash could reveal about you—dropouts aren't the only ones who go dumpstering! Keep track of every written document and incriminating photocopy—keep them all in one place, so you can't accidentally forget one—and destroy them as soon as you don't need them. The fewer there are in the first place, the better; get used to using your memory. Make sure there aren't any ghosts of such writing left behind in impressions on the surfaces you were writing on, whether these be wooden desks or pads of paper. Assume that every use of computers leaves a trail, too.

Don't throw any direct action ideas around in public that you think you might want to try at some point.

Wait to propose an idea until you can gather a group of individuals that you expect will all be interested in trying it; the exception is the bosom companion with whom you brainstorm and hash out details in advance—safely outside your home and away from mixed company, of course. Don't propose your idea until you think the time is right for it to be tried. Invite only those you are pretty certain will want to join in—everyone you invite who doesn't end up participating is a needless security risk, and this can be doubly problematic if it turns out they feel your proposed activity is laughably dumb or morally wrong. Only invite people who can keep secrets—this is critical whether or not they decide to participate.

Develop a private shorthand for communicating with your comrades in public.

It's important to work out a way to communicate surreptitiously with your trusted friends about security issues and comfort levels while in public situations, such as at a meeting called to discuss possible direct action. Knowing how to gauge each other's feelings without others being able to tell that you are sending messages back and forth will save you the headache of trying to guess each other's thoughts about a situation or individual, and help you avoid acting strangely when you can't take your friend aside in the middle of things to compare notes. By the time you have convened a larger group to propose an action plan, you and your friends should be clear on what each other's intentions, willingness to run risks, levels of commitment, and opinions of others are, to save time and avoid unnecessary ambiguity. If you haven't been part of a direct action planning circle before, you'll be surprised how complicated and convoluted things can get even when everyone does arrive prepared.

Develop methods to establish the security level of a group or situation.

One quick procedure you can run at the beginning of a larger meeting at which not everyone is acquainted is the "vouched for" game: as each person introduces himself, all who can vouch for him raise their hands. Only vouch for those you are confident are worthy of your trust. Hopefully, each person is connected to the others by some link in the chain; either way, at least everybody knows how things stand. An activist who understands the importance of good security will not feel insulted in such a situation if there is no one present who can vouch for him and the others ask him to leave.

Meeting location is an important factor in security.

You don't want a place that can be monitored (no private residences), you don't want a place where you can be observed all together(not the park across from the site of the next day's actions), you don't want a place where you can be seen entering and leaving or that someone could enter unexpectedly—post scouts, lock the door once things get started, watch out for anything suspicious.[2]Small groups can take walks and chat; larger groups can meet in quiet outdoor settings—go hiking or camping, if there's time—or in private rooms in public buildings, such as library study rooms or empty classrooms. Best-case scenario: though he has no idea you're involved in direct action, you're close with the old guy who runs the café across town, and he doesn't mind letting you have the back room one afternoon for a private party, no questions asked.

Be aware of the reliability of those around you, especially those with whom you might collaborate in underground activities.

Be conscious of how long you've known people, how far back their involvement in your community and their lives outside of it can be traced, and what others' experiences with them have been. The friends you grew up with, if you still have any of them in your life, may be the best companions for direct action, as you are familiar with their strengths and weaknesses and the ways they handle pressure—and you know for a fact they are who they say they are. Make sure only to trust your safety and the safety of your projects to level-headed folks who share the same priorities and commitments and have nothing to prove. In the long term, strive to build up a community of people with long-standing friendships and experience acting together, with ties to other such communities.

Don't get too distracted worrying about whether people are infiltrators or not; if your security measures are effective, it shouldn't even matter.

Don't waste your energy and make yourself paranoid and unsociable suspecting everybody you meet. If you keep all sensitive information inside the circle of people it concerns, only collaborate with reliable and experienced friends whose history you can verify, and never give away anything about your private activities, agents and police informers will be powerless to gather evidence to use against you. A good security culture should make it practically irrelevant whether these vermin are active in your community or not. The important thing is not whether or not a person is involved with the cops, but whether or not he constitutes a security risk; if he is deemed insecure (double meaning intended), he should never be permitted to end up in a situation in which anyone's safety depends on him.

Learn and abide by the security expectations of each person you interact with, and respect differences in style.

To collaborate with others, you have to make sure they feel at home with you; even if you're not collaborating with them, you don't want to make them uncomfortable or disregard a danger they understand better than you. When it comes to planning direct action, not abiding by the security culture accepted in a given community can wreck not only your chances to cooperate with others on a project, but the possibility of the project happening at all—for example, if you bring up an idea others were planning to try in a setting they deem insecure, they may be forced to abandon the plan as it may now be associated with them. Ask people to outline for you their specific security needs before you even broach the subject of direct action.

Let others know exactly what your needs are when it comes to security.

The corollary of abiding by others' expectations is that you must make it easy for others to abide by yours. At the beginning of any relationship in which your private political life may become an issue, emphasize that there are details of your activities that you need to keep to yourself. This can save you a lot of drama in situations that are already stressful enough; the last thing you need on returning from a secret mission gone awry is to end up in a fight with your lover: "But if you trusted me, you would tell me about this! How do I know you're not out there sleeping with...!" It's not a matter of trust—sensitive information isn't a reward to be earned or deserved.

Look out for other people.

Make explicit to those around you what risks you may pose to them with your presence or with actions you have planned, at least as much as you're able to without violating other precepts of security culture. Let them know to the extent you're able what risks you run yourself: for example, whether you can afford to be arrested (if there are outstanding warrants for you, if you are an undocumented migrant, etc.), what responsibilities you have to keep up with, whether you have any allergies. Don't imperil others with your decisions, especially if you're not able to provide concrete support should they somehow get arrested and charged on account of your behavior. If someone else drops a banner in an area immediately adjacent to a fire you set, the police might charge them with arson; even if the charges can't stick, you don't want to risk their ill will, or accidentally block their planned escape route. If you help initiate a breakaway march that leaves the permitted zone, try to make sure you keep your body between the police and others who have come along but don't necessarily understand the risks involved; if you escalate a spontaneous parade by engaging in property destruction, make sure others who were unprepared for this are not still standing around in confusion when the police show up. Whatever risky projects you undertake, make sure you're prepared to go about them intelligently, so no one else will have to run unexpected risks to help you out when you make mistakes.

Security culture is a form of etiquette, a way to avoid needless misunderstandings and potentially disastrous conflicts.

Security concerns should never be an excuse for making others feel left out or inferior—though it can take some finesse to avoid that!—just as no one should feel they have a "right" to be in on anything others prefer to keep to themselves. Those who violate the security culture of their communities should not be rebuked too harshly the first time—this isn't a question of being hip enough to activist decorum to join the in-group, but of establishing group expectations and gently helping people understand their importance; besides, people are least able to absorb constructive criticism when they're put on the defensive. Nevertheless, such people should always be told immediately how they're putting others at risk, and what the consequences will be should they continue to. Those who can't grasp this must be tactfully but effectively shut out of all sensitive situations.

Security culture is not paranoia institutionalized, but a way to avoid unhealthy paranoia by minimizing risks ahead of time.

It is counterproductive to spend more energy worrying about how much surveillance you are under than is useful for decreasing the danger it poses, just as it is debilitating to be constantly second-guessing your precautions and doubting the authenticity of potential comrades. A good security culture should make everyone feel more relaxed and confident, not less. At the same time, it's equally

unproductive to accuse those who adhere to security measures stricter than yours of being paranoid—remember, our enemies are out to get us.

Don't let suspicion be used against you.

If your foes can't learn your secrets, they will settle for turning you against each other. Undercover agents can spread rumors or throw around accusations to create dissension, mistrust, and resentment inside of or between groups. They may falsify letters or take similar steps to frame activists. The mainstream media can participate in this by reporting that there is an informant in a group when there is not one, or misrepresenting the politics or history of an individual or group in order to alienate potential allies, or emphasizing over and over that there is a conflict between two branches of a movement until they really do mistrust one another. Again, a shrewd security culture that fosters an appropriately high level of trust and confidence should make such provocations nearly impossible on the personal level; when it comes to relations between proponents of different tactics and organizations of different stripes, remember the importance of solidarity and diversity of tactics, and trust that others do, too, even if media accounts suggest otherwise. Don't accept rumors or reports as fact: go to the source for confirmation every time, and be diplomatic about it.

Don't be intimidated by bluffing.

Police attention and surveillance is not necessarily an indication that they know anything specific about your plans or activities: often it indicates that they do not and are trying to frighten you out of continuing with them. Develop an instinct with which to sense when your cover has actually been blown and when your enemies are just trying to distress you into doing their work for them.

Always be prepared for the possibility that you are under observation, but don't mistake attracting surveillance for being effective.

Even if everything you are doing is perfectly legal, you may still receive attention and harassment from intelligence organizations if they feel you pose an inconvenience to their masters. In some regards, this can be for the best; the more they have to monitor, the more thinly spread their energies are, and the harder it is for them to pinpoint and neutralize subversives. At the same time, don't get caught up in the excitement of being under surveillance and begin to assume that the more the authorities pay attention to you, the more dangerous to them you must be—they're not that smart. They tend to be preoccupied with the resistance organizations whose approaches most resemble their own; take advantage of this. The best tactics are the ones that reach people, make points, and exert leverage while not showing up on the radar of the powers that be, at least not until it is too late. Ideally, your activities should be well known to everyone except the authorities.

Security culture involves a code of silence, but it is not a code of voicelessness.

The stories of our daring exploits in the struggle against capitalism must be told somehow, so everyone will know resistance is a real possibility put into action by real people; open incitements to insurrection must be made, so would-be revolutionaries can find each other and the revolutionary sentiments buried in the hearts of the masses find their way to the surface. A good security culture should preserve as much secrecy as is necessary for individuals to be safe in their underground activities, while still providing visibility for radical perspectives. Most of the security tradition in the activist milieu today is derived from the past thirty years of animal rights and earth liberation activities; as such, it's perfectly suited for the needs of small groups carrying out isolated illegal acts, but isn't always appropriate for more aboveground campaigns aimed at encouraging generalized

insubordination. In some cases it can make sense to break the law openly, in order to provoke the participation of a large mass that can then provide safety in numbers.

Balance the need to escape detection by your enemies against the need to be accessible to potential friends.

In the long run, secrecy alone cannot protect us—sooner or later they are going to find all of us, and if no one else understands what we're doing and what we want, they'll be able to liquidate us with impunity. Only the power of an informed and sympathetic (and hopefully similarly equipped) public can help us then. There should always be entryways into communities in which direct action is practiced, so more and more people can join in. Those doing really serious stuff should keep it to themselves, of course, but every community should also have a person or two who vocally advocates and educates about direct action, and who can discreetly help trustworthy novices link up with others getting started.

When you're planning an action, begin by establishing the security level appropriate to it, and act accordingly from there on.

Learning to gauge the risks posed by an activity or situation and how to deal with them appropriately is not just a crucial part of staying out of jail; it also helps to know what you're not worried about, so you don't waste energy on unwarranted, cumbersome security measures. Keep in mind that a given action may have different aspects that demand different degrees of security; make sure to keep these distinct. Here's an example of a possible rating system for security levels:

1. Only those who are directly involved in the action know of its existence.
2. Trusted support persons also know about the action, but everyone in the group decides together who these will be.
3. It is acceptable for the group to invite people to participate who might choose not to—that is, some outside the group may know about the action, but are still expected to keep it a secret.
4. The group does not set a strict list of who is invited; participants are free to invite others and encourage them to do the same, while emphasizing that knowledge of the action is to be kept within the circles of those who can be trusted with secrets.
5. "Rumors" of the action can be spread far and wide through the community, but the identities of those at the center of the organizing are to be kept a secret.
6. The action is announced openly, but with at least some degree of discretion, so as not to tip off the sleeper of the authorities.
7. The action is totally announced and aboveground in all ways.

To give examples, security level #1 would be appropriate for a group planning to firebomb an SUV dealership, while level #2 would be acceptable for those planning more minor acts of property destruction, such as spraypainting. Level #3 or #4 would be appropriate for calling a spokescouncil preceding a black bloc at a large demonstration or for a group planning to do a newspaper wrap, depending on the ratio of risk versus need for numbers. Level #5 would be perfect for a project such as initiating a surprise unpermitted march: for example, everyone hears in advance that the Ani

DiFranco performance is going to end in a “spontaneous” antiwar march, so people can prepare accordingly, but as no one knows whose idea it is, no one can be targeted as an organizer. Level #6 would be appropriate for announcing a Critical Mass bicycle ride: fliers are wrapped around the handlebars of every civilian bicycle, but no announcements are sent to the papers, so the cops won't be there at the beginning while the mass is still vulnerable. Level #7 is appropriate for a permitted antiwar march or independent media video screening, unless you're so dysfunctionally paranoid you even want to keep community outreach projects a secret.

It also makes sense to choose the means of communication you will use according to the level of security demanded. Here's an example of different levels of communications security, corresponding to the system just outlined above:

1. No communication about the action except in person, outside the homes of those involved, in surveillance-free environments (e.g. the group goes camping to discuss plans); no discussion of the action except when it is absolutely necessary.
2. Outside group meetings, involved individuals are free to discuss the action in surveillance-free spaces.
3. Discussions are permitted in homes not definitely under surveillance.
4. Communication by encrypted email or on neutral telephone lines is acceptable.
5. People can speak about the action over telephones, email, etc. provided they're careful not to give away certain details—who, what, when, where.
6. Telephones, email, etc. are all fair game; email listservs, fliering in public spaces, announcements to newspapers, etc. may or may not be acceptable, on a case-by-case basis.
7. Communication and proclamation by every possible medium are encouraged.

If you keep hazardous information out of circulation and you follow suitable security measures in every project you undertake, you'll be well on your way to fulfilling what early CrimethInc. agent Abbie Hoffman described as the first duty of the revolutionary: not getting caught. All the best in your adventures and misadventures, and remember—you didn't hear it from us!

PART VI.

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

31. CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

by ACT UP

What is consensus?

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

Consensus vs. voting

Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. Consensus, on the other hand, is a process of synthesizing many diverse elements together.

Voting is a win or lose model, in which people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself. Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making.

With consensus people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost, each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

A group committed to consensus may utilize other forms of decision making (individual, compromise, majority rules) when appropriate; however, a group that has adopted a consensus model will use that process for any item that brings up a lot of emotions, is something that concerns people's ethics, politics, morals or other areas where there is much investment.

What does consensus mean?

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals.

Consensus takes more time and member skill, but uses lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates creative decision. It gives everyone some experience with new processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill-building. For consensus to be a positive experience, it is best if the group has 1) common values, 2) some skill in group process and conflict resolution, or a commitment to let these be facilitated, 3) commitment and responsibility to the group by its members and 4) sufficient time for everyone to participate in the process.

Forming the consensus proposals

During discussion a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through more discussion, or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. During this discussion period it is important to articulate differences clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are having trouble with a proposal to put forth alternative suggestions.

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives, and

compromise with synthesis.

When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone, and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask if there are any objections or reservations to it. If there are no objections, there can be a call for consensus. If there are still no objections, then after a moment of silence you have your decision. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided.

Difficulties in reaching consensus

If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

Non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")

Reservations ("I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")

Standing aside ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it. ")

Blocking ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral values they are obligated to block consensus.)

Withdrawing from the group. Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. Major philosophical or moral questions that will come up with each affinity group will have to be worked through as soon as the group forms.

Roles in a consensus meeting

There are several roles which, if filled, can help consensus decision making run smoothly. The facilitator(s) aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point-at hand; makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached. Facilitators help to direct the process of the meeting, not its content. They never make decisions for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behavior, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.

A vibes-watcher is someone besides the facilitator who watches and comments on individual and group feelings and patterns of participation. Vibes-watchers need to be especially tuned in to the sexism of group dynamics.

A recorder can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of implementation and a time-keeper keeps things going on schedule so that each agenda item can be covered in the time allotted for it (if discussion runs over the time for an item, the group may or may not decide to contract for more time to finish up).

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process, and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision. This is especially true when it comes to finding compromise agreements to seemingly contradictory positions.

PART VII.

EXIT INTERVIEW

32. EXIT PROCESS

1. All passwords need to be changed after member leaves the organization.
2. All organizational materials including administrative data needs to be given back to the chapters and/or national coordinators by the person leaving the organization.
3. Signatures on ownership, government, and financial materials might need to be changed.
4. All account such a google.docs. listserves, and administrative access on Facebook need to be ended.
5. Make sure all communication about STK is forwarded onto the chapter and/or national coordinators.
6. Announce publicly the individual is ending their appointment via website, listserve, and social media.

33. EXIT INTERVIEW FORM

EXIT INTERVIEW FORM

1. What did you like about your experience with STK?

2. What did you want to get of your experience that you did not get?

3. What allowed you to be successful in your position?

4. What did not allow you to be successful in your position?

5. Did you feel equipped to do your job well?

6. Why did you begin thinking of leaving?

7. How would you describe the culture of this organization and give examples?

8. If you could change anything about your job what would it be?

9. If you could change anything about the organizational structure what would it be?

10. What do you seem most valuable about this organization?
