



# ARTFUL ANTI-OPPRESSION

A TOOLKIT FOR CRITICAL & CREATIVE CHANGE MAKERS

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Systems



## ***Key Change Maker,***

Meegwich, for picking up this resource. Merci, for all the ways that you're invested in learning about and practicing anti-oppression. Thank you for having the courage to prevent discrimination and fight for equality. Gracias, for your commitment to building equitable access to resources in your work, community & personal life. Shishi for believing in the possibility of healthier ways to live and love together. Asante sana for the ways you are resilient. Shukran for your abounding creativity.

## ***You might ask, “What does Artful Anti-Oppression mean anyway?”***

Anti-oppression refers to all the ways an individual, community, institution or system actively prevents, challenges and ends oppression against other people. It means taking a stand against and addressing the ways that oppressed peoples are prevented access to crucial resources let alone choices. It means addressing violence, abuse of power, and the ways people are manipulated, limited, controlled, silenced, incarcerated and erased. It is widely understood that oppression in all its forms can cause mental, emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to people, communities and ecologies. Trauma can cause deep, devastating and sometimes irreparable damage, particularly when it is rooted in harms passed through many generations.

This text proposes that anti-oppression principles and practices should be woven into our personal and social values. In fact, it may likely help you to be a better colleague, neighbor, friend, partner and change maker all around. Ideally you'll feel inspired to be artful in the ways you practice anti-oppression and share this with others!

The arts can be such a powerful and transformative way to learn about, express and practice Anti-Oppression. The arts can allow people to explore themselves, express their feelings, share their stories and communicate in ways that are multidimensional (not just text based). The arts can also give us an outlet to process, heal, to witness, to collaborate and feel heard. The arts can be used to bring communities together to organize creatively around local issues and celebrate our achievements and cultures! The arts can also be used as teaching tools to explore critical equity concepts in a way that is accessible & engaging for diverse learning styles & needs. We also believe that the arts sector, like most fields, can continue to improve equity practices making more resources available and exhibiting more art works from a broader diversity of peoples.

This resource has been assembled through research, community consultations and drawing upon a legacy of organizing, education & socially engaged arts in the Americas. It holds critical theory & grassroots perspectives. It incorporates activities, ideas, concepts, stories, perspectives and art from dozens of creative change makers. Many of these folks are artists, educators, organizers, activists and healers living in Toronto, (Canada) Turtle Island, so the context of this text is largely North American. However, contributors also hail from diverse cultural groups, identities and experiences from all across the globe.

## *How to use this Toolkit*

It has been designed to be engaging for leaders of all ages, creeds, and experiences. However it is not exhaustive. It can be used for individual and group learning. We hope this resources grows organically by being used, and added to by community over time. So keep in touch!

1. The sections of this text are color-coded to help you identify the themes being explored for quick reference.
2. Each section includes:
  - a) Critical materials: critical concepts, word definitions, historical contexts, case studies, related artists & arts works.
  - b) Creative materials: Brainstorm questions, Arts based activities to explore these concepts deeper.
  - c) Research materials: Related resources, texts and web links to help you continue learning & growing!
3. Words with an \* beside them can be found in the Glossary at the back of the text for deeper definitions.



**Note:** All activities include information about approximate time to run, suggested materials and are graded as level 1, 2 & 3 based on the complexity and facilitation skills involved in order for the exercises to be most effective. When in doubt, invite a senior facilitator to support you.

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## Some Key Terms to Open

**Equity** refers to systems & strategies for understanding and influencing the idea and practice of “fairness”. For example, the distribution of resources in political, professional and social situations. These resources can include basic needs like food, housing, clothing, and money, but also education, employment, and safety from violence among other things. In order to have equity in diverse communities we must be able to identify the forms of oppression and discrimination that causes inequity and challenge these.

**Oppression** is the use of power to marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group, often in order to further privilege the oppressing and/or dominant person or group. It is Prejudice + Power.

**Internalized oppression** is a belief that there is something wrong with being part of a marginalized group. Shame, self-hatred, and low self-esteem results when members of an oppressed group take on society’s attitudes toward them and adopt myths and stereotypes about themselves. Internalized oppression can manifest through a sense of inferiority, lowered expectations and limited imagination of possibilities, among other things. Consider how this plays out in the different forms of oppression explored in this toolkit.

**Discrimination** is any action that denies social participation or human rights to an individual or categories of people based on prejudice.

**Prejudice** is an attitude, perspectives and assumptions based on limited information, often stereotypes. Usually, but not always, negative. Prejudiced beliefs, language and practices are damaging on personal and social levels because they deny the individuality and complexity of the person. It forces people into basic (often derogatory) caricatures, one-dimensional identities, and hurtful labels. No one is free of prejudice because we have unfortunately all been raised with prejudiced ideologies all around us. Even if our families taught us about equity many dominant narratives in society teach us prejudice in so many ways. Examples of prejudiced perspectives: Women are weak; Asians are good at math, Youth can’t make wise decisions, etc.

**Marginalization** is the effect of people being considered outside of, different or other than the ruling class and dominant ideas of what is normal. Often marginalization is directly connected to a person or groups real or perceived class, education, social networks, race, ability, age, gender and sexuality among other things. People who are marginalized or “othered” in a society will often experience social and systemic exclusion resulting in limited access to resources and opportunities.



**Normativity** This refers to the values, standards and models in society that are considered normal, what we ought to think, how we are supposed to behave. For example in the West it is considered normal to shake hand when you greet someone. People that deviate or stray from these norms or prescribed ways of being are often punished in a variety of ways by society ranging from being ostracized or excluded, looked down upon and even legal consequences like imprisonment.

**Anti-oppression work** (Also referred to as “Anti-O”) in real terms includes but is not limited to individual and group strategies for:

- Seeking & holding the complex histories that have gotten us here,
- Interrogating and dismantling systems and social practices that are oppressive,
- Excavating & leveraging the power & privileges we have in the world,
- Healing from personal, community and ancestral oppressions,
- Creating & fighting for community based resources and spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and affirming for all people, especially those underserved and exploited in our society.
- Celebrating the resilience of folks surviving and thriving creatively in spite of oppression.



## Start with you

Social justice requires the power of many people working together, however each person is their own agent of change. One person's actions can have an immense ripple effect on others around them. For better or worse. In fact Anti-O work begins with the ways we uproot our own prejudices, and learn to see others and ourselves as whole & dynamic. In order to be most effective in Anti-O work it is crucial to understand how you've experienced & been affected by oppression, as well as the ways you have power and privilege at other peoples expense.



## Ask Yourself...

- Do you generally feel like you have choices, opportunities and the resources you need to grow?
- Are resources being shared fairly among the members of your communities?
- What are the differences in barriers or opportunities you & your communities experience?
- What historical & political contexts have created these inequities?
- Have you had meaningful opportunities to share your experiences of oppression and feel heard, understood or valued?
- Are there ways you can use the power or privileges you have to create more opportunities for others?

## SOME PERSONAL PRACTICES:

\*Inspired by the Anishnabek First Nations “Seven Grandfather Teachings”.

- **Courage:** Challenge yourself to address oppression and interrupt discriminatory behavior wherever it occurs. Consider context and the safety of your community members in your response strategy. Consider that your silence or inaction can suggest you approve of or condone oppressive behavior. Aim to uncover the intentions of the person who has acted in a discriminatory way. Target what they did and not who/what they are. For example “You may not support racism but what you did is racist. Is that your intention?”
- **Healing:** If you are the target of oppression may you find meaningful ways to reject hurtful experiences as “your fault”, and may you find supportive community based forms of resistance. May you find ways to release and heal the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual hurt caused by your experiences of oppression, violence or trauma. Try to identify and alter cycles of hurt in your communities. Share your healing tools & stories with others if helpful.
- **Honesty:** Speak your truth and honor that there are many truths connected to most human histories and dynamics. Never assume that your experience is the same as other peoples or project what is “normal” or “a given” onto others. When you speak try not to generalize feelings, thoughts or behaviors and don’t speak on behalf of a group of people even if you are a member of this group. Use “I” statements, like “I believe this...” or “I’ve observed that...” centered in your individual experience. Learn about the history of your ancestors and of the lands that you live on and share these openly.
- **Humility:** When someone offers feedback around oppressive behavior, it is important to treat it with care. It likely took a lot of courage for that to share, especially if they are targeted by this oppression in society and are used to being silenced and excluded. Never shut down or invalidate someone’s experience. You may not always understand or agree with everyone but differing perspectives should at least complicate your understanding of things.
- **Love:** Yup Love. Love your self in spite of hurtful things said and done to you. Love yourself enough to forgive yourself for your mistakes and shortcomings. Love yourself and your communities enough to heal, laugh, create and celebrate together.
- **Respect:** Listen actively when talking about oppression and power with community (don’t wait for the first opportunity to interrupt or insert your opinion!), and centering the voices of marginalized folks whenever you can. Appreciate and affirm the perspectives and contributions of people different from yourself. Never make assumptions about people or their experiences.
- **Responsibility:** Aim to be responsible, caring or at least reduce harm with your words, actions and emotions whenever possible. Aspire to know when and how to prevent, deescalate or engage in conflict. Apologize and work to make amends when you cause hurt (even if it wasn’t your intention to cause hurt!), especially to your community and folks in your support system.

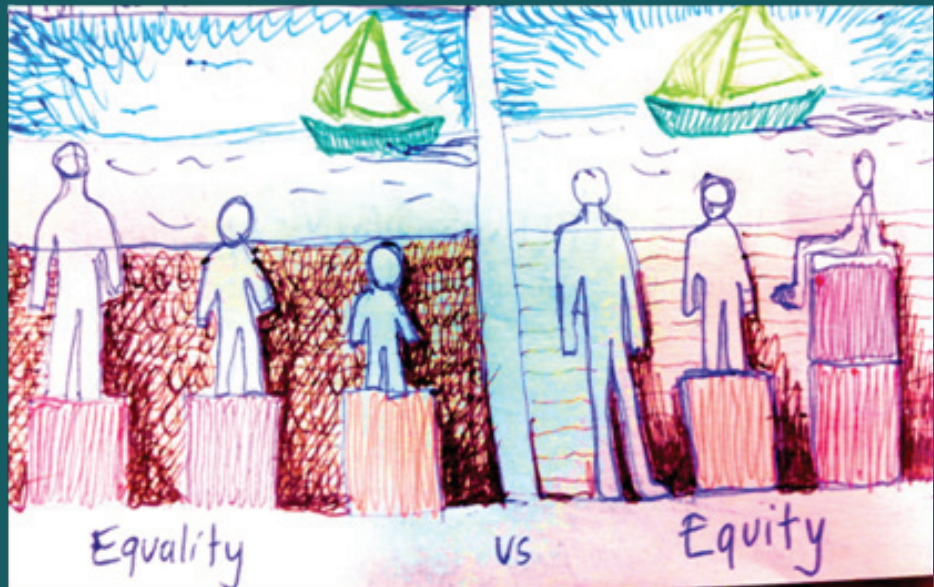


# SOME ARTS ACTIVITIES TO GO DEEPER:

## 1. “Emotional Responsibility Notebook”

Keep journal & writing utensils with you for occasions when you feel strong emotions emerge in group dialogues, or social power dynamics. Write it down! Notice and write about if you feel defensive, angry, triggered, guilty, hurt, argumentative etc.

What personal circumstances might be connected to these feelings? Are you being threatened or feeling uncomfortable? Is it important to share your feelings in this context? Will this focus or derail the conversation and is this necessary? What is your power or privilege in this dynamic? What is at stake?



*Sketch made by participant at a Jumblies Artful Anti-O training.*

Read over your writings before proceeding, Reflect on where they are coming from and Respond accordingly. See if this tool can help you develop a personal awareness about the ways you feel, think and engage in conversations about oppression and discrimination.

## 2. “What Inequity Feels Like”

Think on a situation or context when you felt you were being denied access to necessary resources for unfair reasons. Free write, draw or explore movement and dance as a way to express the emotions this brings up.

What does it feel like to get this experience and the emotions connected out of you for a moment and explore it artistically?

# HOSTING ANTI-O BASED LEARNING WITH THE COMMUNITY

One of the most powerful ways you can create change actively in your life and communities is by hosting opportunities for people to talk, learn and create around Anti-O & other tools for social justice work. Hosting is an art in and of itself. Hosting is about all of the different ways we can invite and convene folks to work through hard things like oppression, historic violence and trauma in ways that are respectful, inspiring, accountable, critical and creative. Hosting can also be a powerful tool to strategize, respond and innovate with groups. Hosting isn't about directing, leading or being the authority on a subject, but rather about creating the conditions (space, energy, trust, resources etc.) for folks to share and learn together. Hosting responsibilities could include skill sets in facilitation, storytelling, supporting democratic visioning & decision-making. Skills also include arts education, grassroots research, conflict negotiation, mediation, environmental design, documentary media, event organizing and child care, among other things. Ideally, hosting a community gathering involves many people at all stages. Luckily this isn't a new thing! Communities have been doing this all over the world for a long time, which means we have ancestors, elders and mentors (current & yet to meet!) who can counsel and work with us.

## SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR HOSTING:

**Be encouraging** – there are too many reasons why working through oppression & building anti-o strategies is hard and risky work. Many folks impacted by oppression have reason to distrust, feel angry or feel vulnerable. Other folks struggle with guilt, fear of being shamed or defensiveness. Encourage folks to share their stories, to be courageous and proud of who they are. Encourage folks to look within, to challenge their egos and their privileges, and to feel motivated by this spirit work.

**Be aware of Power Dynamics** – There are power dynamics at play anytime people are together. This can be mutually beneficial, consensual, manipulative, or downright abusive. Read the “Power section” in this toolkit to learn more about sources of power dynamics. Learn to identify these in action with groups and aspire to prevent, name out loud, challenge and transform them collaboratively. Often this can play out in the ways people participate. Note who shares the most and how they assert themselves. This is also referred to as “taking up space”. If particular people or groups take up space often, name this and invite them to consider why and how they generally feel confident to talk, ask and answer questions, assert their opinions, interrupt and/or discredit other peoples opinions. This can be an opportunity for them to see and challenge their power and privilege. If particular people or groups don't often speak, locate themselves at the edge of the group, or hesitate to share personal stories consider how to build trust, repair conflicts, center their voices and affirm their contributions.

**Challenge prejudice, bias & discrimination** - Biases, stereotypes, labels and prejudices expressed in a group will undoubtedly cause harm, break trust and likely create conflict. When discrimina-

tion goes unchallenged in groups it can appear like it is acceptable or even supported. Not engaging with discrimination does not make it harmless or go away. Those targeted by discrimination may respond with anger, internalize what's being said as true, or just leave. Those perpetuating discrimination may continue thinking their opinion and actions are accepted and normal. You may not always know exactly how to best negotiate the situation but always aim to respond proactively. Each section in this toolkit will offer you insights about various forms of discrimination and prejudice, as well as how these are instilled and maintained in society.

**Foster Respectful Communication** - Dialogue, debate and creative expression are necessary to build understanding and strategize together. As a host, aim to provide resources for participants to learn and practice listening actively, to communicate respectfully, and manage how much space they take up. Hone your skills in supporting fair & effective brainstorms, consensus building and decision-making. Create communication and conduct “ground rules” with groups and commit to them (See Community Commitments activity at end of this section\*). Use visuals, the arts and other alternative (non-verbal) tools to encourage different learning & communication styles, abilities & needs. Support the use of diverse & indigenous languages, not just colonial languages like English, French & Spanish. Invite different opinions, and diverse perspectives, and don't be afraid of disagreements. Debrief often! Trust the wisdom in the room, especially if you are a diverse group.

**Prepare for conflict:** Yup. In fact, conflict is often inevitable, especially when exploring oppression and privilege with folks who have experienced advantage and disadvantage in the same room (which may also be inevitable). Build your skill set in facilitation, harm reduction practices, conflict prevention & de-escalation, as well as transformative justice. When you are hosting and conflict arises take a moment to get grounded, and be fully present. Breathe. Don't get defensive, be dismissive or avoidant. Always aim to create space for all perspectives and experiences in a conflict, but also center the voices of those with less power and/or who have been directly targeted. Work towards negotiation and resolutions that are mutual. If appropriate, seek counsel and mediation outside of your hosted group for more support. Remember that conflict, when negotiated with respect and care, can also be very transformative. Find more related tools in the Accountability section.

**Build understanding of peoples lives and cultural contexts** - As host, you have an opportunity and responsibility to learn about the identities, experiences, histories and cultures of the folks you are working with. This can help you to more effectively identify existing conflicts or power dynamics between different groups of people, and to better understand what informs a persons feelings and perspectives. You can and should do research often. Explore books, web content, art, and events created by and for the diverse folks you work with. Build real relationships with people in your community and aspire to experience people as whole and dynamic. Commit time to learn about each other, to share stories about your lives, your histories, your cultures, and your

experiences in meaningful ways. Create new and shared definitions together. As a host, learn and practice cultural competency\*. Always be respectful and sensitive, observe cultural protocol\*, and acknowledge elders & mentors when they share stories and teachings. Know what appropriation\* is, looks like and how it impacts marginalized peoples. Encourage folks to share about themselves outside the scope of stereotypes. Remind participants that performing or mimicking cultures that are not their own is risky and can be hurtful.



**Host accessible and inclusive spaces** – Some of the most effective and underused strategies for engaging diverse communities across differences, is to design, plan and create environments that are inclusive of various different identities, cultures, belief systems, classes, and accessibility needs. If you don't have diversity in your group, note who is missing from community. How can you reach & engage them more effectively? What targeted resources could you be providing? Are you offering programs, mediums or topics that are relevant? Is the space you are working in accessible for wheelchairs and other mobility devices? Do you have messaging and signage that is welcoming, particularly to folks often excluded? Can you offer translation or ASL\* interpretation for folks who don't communicate through spoken English? Always work towards an accessible ideal.

**Use the arts!!!** - The arts can be great tools for doing self-reflection, animating complex concepts, for visualizing an experience, or expressing feelings. The arts can help pull out stories, inspire innovative responses and strategies. Start with individual experimentation, invite self-portraits and storytelling as trust is built. Remember to share art works by diverse artists dealing with social justice themes and issues. Capture brainstorming in graphic recordings. Use movement & performance activities to embody concepts and themes. Use large art projects to bring folks together and collaborate. Share and celebrate the art works you make together widely!

## OPENING ACTIVITIES FOR HOSTING:

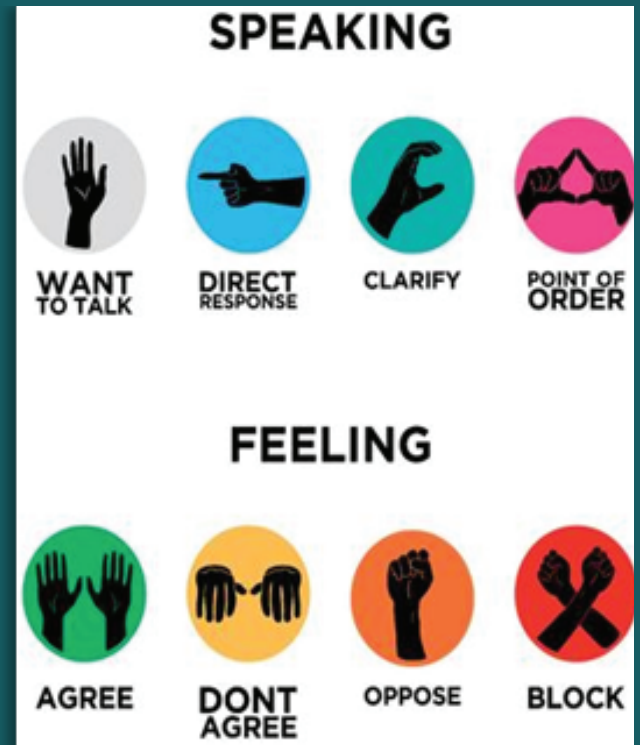
### 1. A Public Transit Visualization

\*Invite participants to close their eyes and visualize as they listen or imagine the scenario as someone interprets for them. Adapt the story as appropriate to your community where useful.

- Facilitators script: You've just embarked onto a busy city bus or subway car. You do an environmental scan to see who is around you and if there is a spot to sit. At one end you see an old couple sitting together holding hands lovingly. You continue panning and see a group of youth who are being boisterous and noisy. On two seats near you there is person who seems to be passed out from having drunk too much alcohol. Across from you there is an attractive young professional. Suddenly, a small group starts doing a flashmob performance of "I Will Survive". Their musical rendition is very good! You realize you've reached your stop and you leave... Now open your eyes or come back to the group.

- Debriefing the activity: Now look back and consider when you were imagining these strangers. What did they look like? What are the genders of the elderly couple? Did you assume they were straight/heterosexual? What were the boisterous youth wearing & what are some of their cultural, gender and racial characteristics? What was the perceived class, social location & mental ability of the person who seemed to be inebriated & passed out? Did you assume this was a man? How do you know the person sitting across from you is a "young professional"? What beauty & class standards might make them appear "attractive"? Were all of the performers doing the flash mob performance perceivably "Able bodied"? What does this tell us about the assumptions and stereotypes we have about one another? Where do these come from and what are the effects?

Use this to inspire critical dialogue or response based art making!



## **Resources.**

### **Facilitation 101**

- <http://www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/Fireitup/FireItUp.pdf>
- <http://seedsforchange.org.uk/facilitationmeeting>
- <http://www.pyeglobal.org/training/pye-training/>
- <http://www.artreach.org/about.html>

### **How To Build “Community Terms of Agreement”**

- <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/groundrules.htm>
- <https://p2pu.org/he/courses/77/content/837/>

### **Consensus Building & Shared Decision-Making**

- <http://www.wikihow.com/Reach-a-Consensus>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus\\_decision-making](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus_decision-making)
- <http://dotmocracy.org>

### **Open Space Technology**

- [http://www.openspaceworld.com/users\\_guide.htm](http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm)

### **No General Hatefulness Poster**

- <http://industrialantioppression.blogspot.ca/>

### **Consensus Building Hand Signs Poster**

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:OccupyHandSignals.pdf>

The background of the image is a green-tinted photograph of architectural blueprints. A large, circular dashed line is drawn on one of the plans, with several small black dots placed around its perimeter. A drafting compass and a pen are visible on the left side of the image, and a pencil lies across the top. The overall scene suggests a focus on design, planning, and accessibility.

# *Ability & Disability Justice*

# ALBEISM, ACCESS, AND DISABILITY JUSTICE\*

## SECTION CO-WRITTEN WITH ANNA MALLA & LEAH LAKSHMI-PIEPZNA

“**Disability**” describes a state of physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, and/or developmental health that does not conform to mainstream society’s norms around physical and mental ability. Often disability is seen as a fault, an individual health problem, or something wrong with an individual or group of individuals. Mainstream society does not generally think of people with disabilities as being like any other cultural group, with histories, movements, artwork, and stories to tell. An important aspect of thinking through disability and ability is to remember that for disabled people/people living with disabilities, the biggest problem is not the ways in which their bodies/minds function, but the fact that the world is set up for able bodied people.

Historically, the medical model is the primary paradigm\* through which disability has been understood in mainstream society, and this legacy carries through to today. In North America, the medicalization of disability has been intricately tied up in eugenics, sterilization, incarceration, immigration controls, and institutionalization. Eugenics, which is based in an understanding that certain people are more worthy of existence and that their reproduction should be prioritized over other people’s, very much functioned as an explicit way to reduce populations that were seen as “unfit” from the mid 1800s up until around the 1950s. While explicit policies of eugenics and forced sterilization of disabled peoples no longer exist in North America, mass sterilization of cash poor peoples of colour, and in particular Black peoples, continues at alarming rates.

“**Ableism**” can be defined as the discrimination perpetuated against people with disabilities. Ableism is based on beliefs and practices that assign inferior value to people who have developmental, emotional, physical, or psychiatric disabilities. Like all other systems of disadvantage and advantage, Ableism intersects with class, race, gender, sexuality, and many other identity markers to weave a complex web of access to resources, dignity, and respect.

“**Fatphobia**,” a form of Ableism, describes the discrimination perpetuated against people whose bodies and body weight are larger than society’s norms. In North America, where thinness continues to be revered as the ultimate end-goal as far as beauty standards are concerned, fatphobia exists at every level of society.

“**Ageism**,” another form of Ableism, describes the discrimination against people based on their age, whether young or old.

“**Disability justice**” is a newer political movement focusing on sick and disabled people of colour, queer and trans disabled people of colour, and everyone who are marginalized in mainstream disability organizing. Disability Justice is to the mainstream Disability Rights movement what the environmental justice movement is to mainstream environmental movements.

Disability justice means asserting a vision of liberation where destroying ableism is part of social justice. It is about valuing and centering sick and disabled bodies and not leaving anyone behind.



*“Disability justice – an understanding that a.) Centers disability and b.) Understands that ableism, racism, heterosexism, capitalism, classism, all work together to oppress people. It says the system will never save us so we have to build our communities for ourselves. It values people being interdependent instead of independence.”*  
-Stacey Milbern, [cripchick.com](http://cripchick.com)

## Case Studies.

Sins Invalid is a performance project that incubates and celebrates artists with disabilities, centralizing artists of color and queer and gender-variant artists as communities who have been historically marginalized. Their performance work explores the themes of sexuality, embodiment and the disabled body. Conceived and led by disabled people of color, Sins Invalid develops and presents cuttingedge work where normative paradigms of “normal” and “sexy” are challenged, offering instead a vision of beauty and sexuality inclusive of all individuals and communities.” They are amazing- you should check them out plus videos of their performances at [sinsinvalid.org](http://sinsinvalid.org)!

They define disability to include:

- Folks who are physically disabled.
- Folks who identify as having mental illness/ being psychiatric consumer/ survivors/ being Crazy/Mad.
- Folks with chronic illness like (but not limited to) fibromyalgia, lupus, environmental illness, cancer...
- Folks who belong to a sensory minority (folks who are Deaf, blind, deaf/blind).
- Folks who are neuro-diverse (whose brains work differently from “normy” folks- Autistic spectrum folks, and other folks whose brains understand and interface differently from the norm).

## Some key concepts of Disability Justice:

**Self-determination** is a crucial element of disability justice but also in anti-oppression practice in general. It is rooted in the idea that people have a right to freedom of actions that they choose. This looks like making decisions and taking actions that are up to us and not made for or taken away from us by others. Boom!

### A quick exercise:

List the following categories for participants to see - housing; sexuality (sexual self-expression, dating, relationships); transportation; using the bathroom; socializing. Ask them to decide,

1. Which of those things they would never give up
2. Which of the other things they would give up in order to maintain their #1 choice.

Of course for most people they would never think about choosing one over the others or giving any of them up, and they are all interconnected but routinely people with disabilities have to make these kinds of choices.

*“The problem is not with the disabled person, the problem is the environment. Disability is diversity, not a deficit.” - Toronto academic & activist Loree Erickson*



The concept of **Accessibility** refers to the “ability to access” and benefit from systems or resources. In more specific terms it refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities and special needs. **Universal design** is an emerging process of creating products and spaces that are usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities, and considering the widest range of possible situations. Essentially, it means designing and creating things for everybody! No one gets left out.

In order to do this as an urban planner, architect, designer, or program coordinator you have to approach creating accessible space through a disability positive ‘accommodation model’.

### For example;

*“It’s not the person in a wheelchair or other mobility assisting technology that has to figure out how to get up the stairs and into our community center (because it was designed through an ableist assumption that everyone can walk up the stairs). Rather, We the community center need to get a ramp, automatic opening doors and other structural accessibility aids to welcome all members of our community!”*

It's also important to remember things like communication, language & learning styles as aspects of Accessibility. Things to consider:

- Making visual resources accessible to folks who are seeing impaired through brail and audio based tools, and much more!
- Making programs accessible to folks who are hearing impaired through sign language interpretation, visual signage, subtitles on videos, handouts with presentations and much more!
- Making learning accessible for folks with learning disabilities using a diversity of learning tools and activities, using visual arts to explore concepts, learning in smaller groups or with mentors among many other things!
- Creating safe spaces to work with folks that have mental illness through a harm reduction & conflict de-escalation strategy, having 'chill out spaces' with arts materials and music, and challenging stigmas around mental health so people can feel comfortable asking for support.

Looking at language - A People First approach;

Some terms folks with different abilities like to have used by allies:

- People with Disabilities (PWD), Disabled, Special Needs, or Differently abled.

What are some terms we can use other than "normal" or "able bodied" to describe folks who don't have disabilities? Specifically, terms implying that there isn't a standard or norm in body ability at all!

- Like...Temporarily Able Bodied (TAB) or non-disabled?
- Making programs accessible to folks who are hearing impaired through sign language interpretation, visual signage, subtitles on videos, handouts with presentations and much more!
- Making learning accessible for folks with learning disabilities using a diversity of learning tools and activities, using visual arts to explore concepts, learning in smaller groups or with mentors among many other things!
- Creating safe spaces to work with folks that have mental illness through a harm reduction & conflict de-escalation strategy, having 'chill out spaces' with arts materials and music, and challenging stigmas around mental health so people can feel comfortable asking for support.



Image by Micah Bazzant & Sins Invalid.

## Disabled S/heroes: Beyond the Jerry Lewis Telethon

Who do you think of as disabled heroes? Disabled stories? Journal for ten minutes and make a list of people you can think of - you, folks in your blood or chosen family, people you've read about or watched on tv.

**If you can't think of any, here are two examples:**

Harriet Tubman was an enslaved Black person. When she was 13, she threw herself between a slave & the overseer who was about to whip him. The overseer hit her & gave her a traumatic brain injury (TBI). After she escaped slavery, she went on secret missions to rescue other slaves. Because of her TBI, many people brushed her off as "crazy". She played up her disability so no one would guess she was mapping out paths for slaves to escape. She also received visions that she felt were from God that showed her the routes to take the Black people she was freeing. She liberated over 300 enslaved African people. She also lived out the last years of her life in St Catherines Ontario, near Toronto.



*Image by Micah Bazzant & Sins Invalid.*

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter who painted using vibrant colors in a style that was influenced by Mexican Indigenous culture.

Frida had polio as a child and was also affected by being crushed in a bus accident when she was a young woman. Her art illustrated both her love of her body & her experience with disability. She drew on her body casts when she was bedbound. She was a modern woman & had many lovers of many genders, was a political radical and fought for her own and her communities' liberations. Frida is both a feminist icon for the way she was not afraid to be herself and a legend for the way she brought light to Mexican art and culture.

1. Do you usually think of Harriet Tubman or Frida Kahlo as disabled? Why or why not?
2. How do you think Frida and Harriet's disabilities were sources of strength in their lives?

# What Does Disability Look Like?

LEVEL 1 | TIME: 30 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Tables with chairs for all participants or spread on the floor as is most comfortable. Materials: Paper, magazines, pastels, markers, pencil crayons, glitter, glue, scissors, sparkles, etc.

Invite participants to consider what disability looks like in real terms. This does not mean stereotypes! Ask them to free-draw or collage for 5-10 minutes exploring bodies, movement & communication.

- Invite participants to share back what they visualized and why?
- What are common images, patterns & themes?
- Ask participants to share where and what they've learned about disability and people with disabilities throughout their lives? Do we have a full picture?

Now ask participants to create illustrations for 5-10 minutes that include forms of “invisible disabilities” like chronic illness, chronic pain, sensory challenges (deaf, blind), learning or speech impediments and mental health.

- Invite participants to share back what they visualized and why?
- What are common images, patterns & themes?
- What does this tell us of our assumptions about disability?

Next level: You may also choose to select photos of people with visible and invisible disabilities to show to your group and explore what their successes and challenges have been in life. You can select photos of diverse people with visible and invisible disabilities who have shared their stories online (on reputable sites for and about folks with disabilities) as a reference.

# Universal Art.

LEVEL 3 | TIME: 40 minutes or more. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Paper & markers for planning. Mixed media for actual Universal art works.

In small groups invite participants collaboratively design a piece of art using any mediums and materials they like that can be universally experienced by an audience with diverse dis/abilities. This means creating something that can be engaged with through visuals, sounds, smells, textures, descriptions and other accessible elements. If there is a message in the art piece this must also be universally accessible. It should also be designed within an accessible space.

- Share a list of all potential access challenges for folks with different abilities experiencing art.
- Discuss the experiences and messages the group wants every single person who witnesses the art piece to be exposed to.
- Have groups share their concepts and give each other feedback, exploring potential access needs over looked.

Next level: Actually create arts works with these universal designs! Host an accessible public exhibition and invite all your community members with special invitations to folks with diverse abilities and access needs! Experience and celebrate art all together!

## Imperfectly Perfect Painting.

LEVEL 2 | TIME: 30 to 60 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Tables with chairs. Materials: Thick papers, non-toxic paints, various paint brushes, still life materials (fruits, textiles, dynamic objects, etc).

Invite participants to explore all of the ways that they can create a painting of a still life using other parts of their bodies to put paint to paper rather than their hands. Some things to remind them:

- To experiment with several different paint brush holding & manipulation techniques (elbow, between wrists, toes, between chin \* neck etc.)
- To work at dynamic interpretations of the still life. Realism isn't the goal.
- To be safe and respectful with their bodies and the materials.
- That simulation or mimicry of an experience like a physical disability does not mean you can now understand the experience of living with a disability (and the lifetime of navigating the world, adapting and coping in ways often unnoticed by outsiders) but it should challenge the assumptions that living with a disability means no/low quality of life.

Now invite participants to pair up as painting collaborators. Change up the still life composition. One person in the pair will be the painter and the other will direct the painter to create a simulated image that they envision. Be sure to also switch roles in pairs. Approaches for painting could include;

- The director leading the painters hand with light pressure to guide from their palm, wrist, forearm or elbow on the back of the painters hand or forearm.
- The director leads the painter by explaining through words the colors, brushes, line movements and textures they want to see.
- The director leads the painter by pointing in the air (with finger, closed hand, elbow, foot) to the materials, lines and shapes they want to create and the painter interpreting what they witness. In this case having code sounds or gestures for specific materials, lines and shapes may also be helpful.

Post all of the works created up for everyone to see and do a gallery walk together. Invite participants to share about their experiences;

- What do you see in the work?
- What did you learn about yourself? Or about your partner?
- What does this tell us about the ways we can creatively adapt to leverage our diverse abilities?
- What does this show us about ways to listen actively, to be an accomplice and support other people's self-determination?

## Access Audit.

LEVEL 3 | TIME: 30 to 60 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Writing and planning materials, a smartphone or a computer with internet access.

Access audits are things folks do to assess how accessible a place really is. Ever heard, "Oh yeah, it's super accessible- there's just a couple of steps?" Or, "It's accessible for sure"- but there's no ASL, or the bathrooms are in the basement, or it is really loud and overwhelming, or there aren't gender neutral bathrooms, or the place uses really scented toxic cleansers? Access audits are a way of mapping access based on the needs of the disabled and differently abled community.

The founder of Building Radically Accessible Communities Everywhere explains, *"Disability justice focused access mapping is about collectively creating useful, accurate, broad based, and up to date accessibility information about the physical environment so we can make informed choices about what events and spaces we can participate in and support. RAMP started in 2009 out of frustration with the lack of useful (or any) accessibility information in our communities."*

In this activity, you'll try access mapping yourself. This means deepening your knowledge about what access is, and learning some tools to assess accessibility. With you participants, choose a space they care about (local business, home, work space, community-public space etc.) and can have some influence on. Have them conduct an access audit using one of the following tools!



### **A) Axsmat Smart Phone App:**

If you have access to a smartphone, download the Axsmat app here: <http://www.axsmat.com/faq/>

Axsmat is an app developed by scooter using filmmaker Jason da Silva to rate places on how accessible they are. Go for a walk in your neighborhood and using the tools you learned in the video, rate places based on access.

### **B) Insightful blog that details many access audit considerations:**

<https://radicalaccessiblecommunities.wordpress.com/radical-access-mappingproject-vancouver/>

This is a great blog written by a rad queer disabled white person living in unceded Coast Salish territories that will teach you a hell of a lot of science about access.

### **C) Word document template for access auditing:**

I know- all the questions can be super overwhelming! But don't fear. Go here: <http://batchgeo.com/map/ramp> and click on an icon on the map to read the descriptions of what this looks like when it's all written out.

Next Level: With the findings of tangible and intangible barriers in your access audit invite your participants to create a universal design for the space so it can be accessible for all the diverse bodies in your community. Have them map this out visually (and other forms like text & audio) so their design can be shared with others invested in the space and those who manage it. See if you're group can advocate and organize to have the space improved with some of their universal designs implemented!

*\*Activity contributed by Leah Lakshmi-Piepneza*

## Resources.

### Ableism:

- <http://facesoffibro.blogspot.ca/2009/05/disability-101-disability-ableism-and.html>
- <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/11/19/what-is-ableism-five-things-aboutableism-you-should-know/>

### Allyship:

- [https://www.nfb.ca/film/tying\\_your\\_own\\_shoes/trailer/tying\\_your\\_own\\_shoes\\_trailer](https://www.nfb.ca/film/tying_your_own_shoes/trailer/tying_your_own_shoes_trailer) <http://examinedexistence.com/the-nine-different-types-ofintelligence/>
- <http://www.drhappyllife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/l4.png>

### Transforming language around disability:

- <http://www.traponline.com/al2.pdf>
- [http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/About\\_Plain\\_Language/aboutplainlanguage.html](http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/About_Plain_Language/aboutplainlanguage.html)

### By and for folks with disabilities:

- <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/>
- Ethno-racial people with disabilities coalition of Ontario: <http://www.erdco.ca/>

### Toronto Artist-Activist-Academic, Loree Erickson:

- <http://www.femmegimp.org/femmegimp%20files/outofline.pdf>
- 

### Ottawa Artist-Activist-Academic, Edward Ndopu:

- <http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2013/01/201312musings-from-a-queercrip-femme-man-of-color/>

### Access Audits:

- Jason Da Silva (Axsmap, Jason's story, videos): <http://wheniwalk.com/axs-map/>

### Accessible Learning Spaces:

- <http://classroom-aid.com/2013/04/17/11-basic-tips-for-making-learning-content-accessible/>
- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ide/docs/Top%2010%20Accessibility%20Tips%20for%20Professors.pdf>
- <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/critical-ways-faculty-can-support-all-students-with-disabilities/>

The background of the slide is a detailed architectural floor plan, likely of a school or institutional building, rendered in a light green color. The drawing shows various rooms, corridors, and a large central area with a dashed circular boundary. A black pen and a pair of compasses are visible on the drawing, suggesting a design or planning process. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional.

# *Class, Classism & Capitalism*

# FLIPPING THE PYRAMID: CLASS, CLASSISM AND CAPITALISM

Class is complicated and certainly weaves and intersects with all other systems of advantage. To be precise, race, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, language etc all affect and influence ones access to resources, economic wealth and power.

The term '**Class**' refers specifically to a hierarchal social stratification system (top down, pyramid of power) that organizes people into categories based on social, economic and educational access and status. A common example would be "Upper, middle and lower class".

In 'Marxist theory' class refers to a persons relationship to the "**means of production**" which translates to the ways we produce goods and services in our world today. For example, producing clothing for mass consumption. If you own the clothing manufacturing company (including materials, designs, equipment, buildings & land their on etc) then you will make more money (profit) and have more power than a person who works in the factory fabricating the clothing to sell.

In this model the term '**Proletariat**' referred to those who work (And sell their labor) but don't own the businesses and industries that produce resources & make profit. The term '**Bourgeoisie**' referred to those who could invest economically, own and live off of the surplus profits generated by businesses and industries, while benefiting from the labor & disempowerment of the Proletariats.

Of course, it's very important to understand the living characteristics and implications of these class categories while considering things like familial lineage, education, race, gender, sexuality and so on. Also, unlike other aspects of human identity (race for example), an individual may be able to change their class of origin over time.

- **Ruling-Owning Class** (Own means of production): People in this class bracket generally own and control the economic base and infrastructure (industry doing resource extraction, production & trade) nationally & globally. They also often participate in or control the political and ideological superstructure (government, law, policing, media, educational system etc.). Often wealth is passed on intergenerationally through family ties and is directly connected to profits made from colonization of land, peoples and laws (native land treaties & slave labor for example). Today the richest 20% of the world hold three quarters of the global income.
- **Professional-Middle Class** (Manage means of production): People in this class bracket usually have high levels of education and professional qualifications like academics, lawyers, engineers, doctors, politicians, executives and small business owners. They tend to identify with dominant culture, with ruling class values around ownership and job security, and will perform ruling class manners (language, accents, terms, education base, social circles etc). The middle class generally have disposable income (surplus after basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing are covered), have greater personal wealth (car, home, land ownership etc.)

and may see themselves as “upwardly mobile” and entitled to greater social & economic capital.

- **Working-Poverty Class** (Laborers in production & Unemployed) Blue Collar”: The majority of the world’s population resides in this class bracket – more than 80% of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day. Many are underemployed, dependent on precarious low wage labor, and living with sustenance incomes (covering basic human needs). Often this means working dangerous jobs with little to no access to education, health care, regular nutrition, housing or the health and safety that comes with these resources. In some countries the poverty class may access or rely on social welfare supports though this is usually limited and does little to raise people above the poverty line. Particularly, youth, single parents, women, trans people, racialized peoples, folks with disabilities, newcomers and people without immigration status are disproportionately affected by Poverty. **Chronic Poverty** refers to extreme poverty over extended periods of time, even generations, and is experienced by those who have benefited the least from global economic growth, usually as a result of socio-economic marginalization.

**Classism** is the differential treatment of peoples based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is also the systematic oppression of “lower class” groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant and “upper class” groups. This operates on various levels;

**Systemic Classism** includes political and institutional policies, laws and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes resulting in and maintaining drastic income and wealth inequalities. For example, poor folks not being able to afford higher education which in turn means only accessing low-wage jobs. But let’s go deeper. As a result of ‘Globalism’ through European ‘Imperialist’ colonization Capitalism is the dominant economic system around the world. In capitalism, trade, industry and the ‘means of production’ are largely or entirely privately owned and operated for profit. Characteristics include; the drive for capital accumulation at all cost, competitive free markets with limited restrictions and wage labor (caped wage for labor in production vs. all profits generated for ‘owners’). Examples of political policies established to support capitalism, profit generation and free markets include prioritizing property rights and corporate tax breaks Vs upholding human rights, preventing human exploitation or protecting the environment. ‘Sweatshops’, for example, are a direct result of these forms of globalized political policy.

**Socio-Cultural Classism** refers to the social ideologies and beliefs that support these classist systems and the culture(s) that perpetuate them. In our society “being successful” generally refers to “making money” and this is expected to be most peoples primary motivation in life.

We ascribe characteristics like “Worthiness”, “Ability”, “Hard Working”, “Intelligent”, “Beautiful”, “Classy”, “Status” and “Elite” to those who have money, are from the upper class or are upwardly mobile (able to climb the class ladder). It is also considered ideal to have or look like you have lots of money in order to buy lots of things, motivated through the culture of ‘Consumerism’. For example; media and advertisements encourage you to buy more things in order to have a better life. So you work hard to get money and spend it on products that profit the businesses and corporations who pay for the media your watching. However this cycle often leads to debt because you need more products then you can afford. Or the cost of goods rise but not the minimum wage. Or you spend more time working than doing other things you like in order to make money to buy things you don’t have time to use...

**Personal & Inter-personal classism** refers to the ways that individuals internalize classist values and play these out through interpersonal human dynamics. As a result of classist



*Graffiti by Banksy.*

stereotypes it is often believed that poverty is caused by poor morals and ethics, unintelligence, dirtiness, laziness, excessive consumption of drugs and alcohol, violent & criminal tendencies, mental illness, disability, biological disposition (often racialized and racist), and weak upbringing. However, many of these characteristics are actually the side effects of poverty and could be prevented with better access to social services and resources. People who are poor and working class may internalize these stereotypes, may feel inadequate and inferior, or may feel shame and express denial about their family and heritage. This may also play out like hostility, blame or claiming superiority over people in lower classes or other marginalized groups than oneself, while believing that classist institutions are fair. On the

other hand, we see how one’s life is so different depending on who your parents are, where you grow up, and your access to schooling, language, inheritance, good food, healthcare, and family contacts that come with being born or becoming higher class. As a result people with wealth often have a particular kind of confidence in themselves, a sense of entitlement over anything they want, a sense of superiority over lower classes, and a perspective that their beliefs are “common sense”. Sometimes people who are poor and working class will try to “pass” or appear as upper class through clothing, dialect, accent, and mannerisms. It’s also possible for poor and working class people to climb the class ladder (unlike an aspect of identity like race which is difficult or impossible to change) however race, gender, sexuality & ability are often limiting

factors as a result of intersecting oppressions experienced like racism, genderism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism. As a result, the upper and ruling classes of the world are predominantly white able-bodied cis-gendered straight men.

## Movement Building

There are deep histories and contemporary movements of grassroots organizing around the world challenging classism and addressing poverty. This issue straddles and intersects with most other systems of advantage because most often poverty is inherited as a result of generational marginalization (as with race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, language, nationality, status etc.) and/or people experience barriers to employment & other opportunities because of individualized marginalization (disability, sexuality etc.). Also, if one has financial resources or economic power they may be able to mitigate some of the marginalization they experience in terms of accessing needed resources & supports.

We cannot separate the relationships between class, race, gender, colonialism and the unfair distribution of wealth both locally (Toronto, Canada) and globally. As a result, social justice initiatives addressing poverty invariably must challenge many different issues and barriers such as labor rights, job stability & paying workers living wages locally and internationally. Others focus on affordable housing, access to good food, and accessible social services for all. Others challenge racist and classist immigration & migrant worker laws, while many are fighting against the effects of free trade and corporate resource extraction causing great ecological destruction to people's homes and ways of life. And these are just a few examples!



Graphic by Farmer & Artist 'breakfast'

On a **systemic level** there are several different socio-economic & political models that exist other than capitalism around the world and offer different strategies for organizing. Many of these political movements have had leading roles in the fight for independence of many third world nations from their colonial rulers. However, there can still be issues found with all of the existing political systems today.

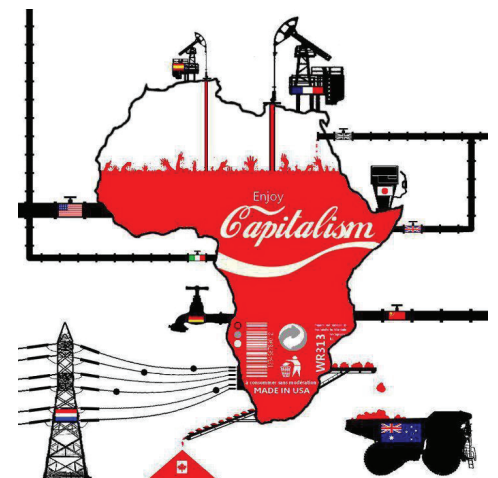
## Just an Example

- Socialism, characterized by social ownership of the means of production and co-operative management of the economy. The role of the state is to construct and maintain socialism and to support direct democracy through people led organizations like labor unions etc. While the capitalist doctrine of “individualism” stresses people should compete and act in isolation from one another, socialism centers on cooperation and sharing.
- Also check out Communism, Anarchism, Libertarianism, Syndicalism, or Maoism for more insight.
- Can you imagine other creative economic models that prioritize social & ecological well being?!

On a **social level** various movements exist in north America that focus on challenging poverty through anti-capitalist theory and academic research, lobbying governments to have stricter policies around corporate profiteering and advocating for human and environmental rights globally in the face of free trade laws, among other things.

Are there any campaigns in your community looking at affordable and fair housing, homelessness, food justice, employment equity etc? Do you relate to any of these issues? How does poverty affect or influence your community? Can you leverage your creativity for any of these initiatives?

On a **personal level** you may consider how internalized classism affects your opinions about success, money and human worth. You can consider the ways that money has privileged or limited your access to resources in life. Or work to consciously consume products that aren't produced at the expense marginalized people, and rather are produced & traded fairly. And this is all just a nice place to start!





## Case Studies.

**BPP** - While known for their revolutionary direct actions challenging racism & police brutality in America, The Black Panther Party focused much of their organizing efforts in social programs providing meals for children, community health clinics & critical education for black youth living in urban poverty. See their 'Ten Point Program' as an example of their organizing values. "10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace". Additionally, many of the BPP's leaders, writers and public speakers were women.



<http://pixgood.com/black-panther-party-women.html>

**J4MW** – Justicia or 'Justice for Migrant Workers' is a Canadian advocacy group composed of migrant workers and allies. It grew out of grass roots organizing in 2001 as the result of a serious labour dispute resulting in the unfair deportation of 20 workers from Leamington Ontario to Mexico. Investigation of employer practices was difficult because migrant workers risked being punished or fired for speaking out. It was clear that migrant agricultural workers were acutely neglected and abused in Canada, doing dangerous and difficult low wage work with little to no rights or protections. A great film was produced about these events, issues and migrant justice work being done called "El Contrato" by filmmaker Min Sook Lee.

**Watch it for free here!** [https://www.nfb.ca/film/el\\_contrato](https://www.nfb.ca/film/el_contrato)  
'Chiapas'. Photo of mural segment by Levi Gahman

# Four Stories

LEVEL 2 | TIME: 40 to 60 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Open, floor room to move around, perhaps a table for accessibility needs. Materials: Flip chart or craft paper roll & markers.

This activity allows for dynamic, intuitive storytelling about Class experiences & capturing deeper insights about how this represents our society. Remind participants that we are all storytellers because we have lives full of experiences worth sharing. Invite four volunteer storytellers to come up and stand in front of the audience with their backs turned to the group.

Warm up: Have each volunteer take their turn revolving to face the audience however only one volunteer can face the audience at a time. Encourage them to be attentive to each others movements & personal intuition. (2-5 mins experimenting)

- Now ask the storytellers to think on a situation when they felt their economic class made them “stand out”. Now explain that this will be a dynamic storytelling experience. When one of the volunteers is facing the audience they are the storyteller and will keep telling their story until one of the other performers turns around and begins telling their story. The previous storyteller then turns again with their back audience. Only one story can be told at once. (5-10 mins storytelling)
- Let the performers flow through this process long enough for their stories and the major details to come out. This could include who they were around, the environment, what they were doing, and how they felt. Now ask the performers to add into their story how this made them feel and think about their class.
- As the stories are being told have 4 or more audience members recording with marker on large paper (spread across the floor, on a table or taped to a wall as is most accessible to your group) what they hear & see in the stories using words, quotes, insights, images, themes, colors, textures, and associations etc.
- Debrief this experience with the entire group. Ask the audience who just listened to share what they saw, heard and felt. Ask the participants to share how it felt to tell their story to an audience and how it felt for their story to be woven with others. Then ask the graphic recorders to share what they captured. They may have intuitively decided to continue adding elements as the listening audience & storytellers shared which should also be shared!

What does this illustrate about the nuances of class, privilege, normative standards and the experience of not fitting in? What does this tell us about the intersectionality of various forms of oppression & systems of disadvantage?

Next level: Consider using the stories or graphic recording (or both!) in other art forms like an audio piece, a play, group poem, a large drawing or a mural, for example!

## Piece of the Pie.

LEVEL 1 | TIME: 20 to 40 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: On the floor or across a table top, whichever is large enough & most comfortable for your group. A large sheet of paper, markers & other writing utensils.

On the sheet of paper trace a large circle that goes to the edges of the paper and a second much smaller circle (Approximately one foot in diameter) at the very center of the large circle. Invite all participants to select writing utensils and trace themselves a pie slice in the circle. Remind them that everyone in the group needs to get a slice in the circle. \*Note how this gets negotiated by participants, note who makes a small or large piece for themselves etc.

- Now ask participants to fill their pie slice with free writing & drawing for 3-6 mins about what they believe it takes to get “a piece of the pie” in society. Depending on how the group engages with this question you may include additional prompts like “What are normative or expected strategies?” “What are alternative or innovative strategies?” or “What is the pie?”... etc. You can also remix this and have each participant take turns speaking to these prompts out loud for 1-2 minutes each and have the rest of the group all record what they hear into the speakers pie slice.
- Once participants have filled their pie slices step back and ask the group to look over and debrief all of the pie slices together. What are common themes, questions and insights? Invite each participant to share some highlights from their slices.
- As a group, come up with a collaborative visual that represents the crux of this knowledge harvest or that represents an overarching question or inspiration. Draw this image with a few words if needed in the small center circle. Post this publicly for the group to see in future sessions and possibly integrate this into larger artistic and political group projects!

## Shop Keeper's Activity.

LEVEL 3 | TIME: 60 to 90 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Open area with room for 4 tables set up. Materials: Four tables, flip chart, markers, pre-made parent index cards.

Premise: You are creating a miniature market place with shops & shopkeepers where the main items for sale are the resources needed by parents to help their children have “a good life”.

There are four shops selling resources; Health Care, Education, Extra Curricular Activities, and Nutrition. These can be represented by a table/booth with a sign and a youth facilitator playing the shopkeeper. Each shop has a set of resources they are selling to parents for their children. For example - Health care: Family doctor \$20, medicine \$40, specialists \$80, private hospital room \$100. Education: public school \$50, private school \$200, tutors \$60, post secondary education \$500. Extra curricular activities: Sports \$40, music & art lessons \$60, summer camps \$90, family vacations \$200. Nutrition: Fast food \$7, Staples \$15, Fresh produce \$30, Meats \$50, Vitamins & supplements \$50, Nutritionist \$60, Delicacies \$70. \*Note, these prices are just representations. Of course, you or your Shopkeepers may ascribe different product categories and prices to this game as well.

Four shopkeepers are selected from the group. Each is given an index card with a list of their sellable products & prices. They also have prompts about how to engage with purple & green parents. For example, they should be courteous & generous with green parents, giving them extras or bargains, and treating them like they are regular & ideal customers. Shop keepers should treat purple parents with distrust, for example, charging them extra taxes, suggesting they are “sold out”, watching them suspiciously, suggesting the cheap product alternatives etc. They are also trying to make as much profit on sales as possible. Encourage shopkeepers to develop a character, perhaps based on someone they've encountered selling/providing these essential resources.

Remaining participants are each given a colored parent card. They are then invited to create “Parental Units” caring for one child that should include single parents, couples (2 people with the same colored cards), and families (3 or more people with the same colored cards) and given a green baby or purple baby identified by an index card of information. Green baby cards illustrate money they have access to ranging from \$1000-5000. The purple baby cards illustrate money ranging from \$100-800. Cards should also include some characteristics of their children like; is very creative, is shy, has asthma, is an active child, has a learning disability, has natural leadership skills, has an iron deficiency, speaks several languages etc. Again, you or your Parent group may add or edit the characteristics and aptitudes of the children cards relative to your communities and experiences.

All parents primary objectives are to provide resources necessary so their children can grow up and live successfully. Every time they purchase something money is subtracted from their cards. The shopkeepers mark products purchased and money deductions on the parent cards as they shop. You get the picture now right? Have parents move around from shop to shop acquiring resources based on the experience they want to encourage for their children until some parents are no longer able to participate because they no longer have money left on their cards.

To add dynamism you may want to add a Trickster character that gives out Wild Cards through the resources market to parents & shopkeepers. Be creative when creating these & they should reflect aspects of resilience as well as misfortune. Some examples include: Your child suddenly falls ill with pneumonia. Your child receives an educational bursary for academic excellence. You lose your job (\$100 deduction). You leverage a social connection to get your child into a top private school. Your grandmother knows how to heal many ailments with traditional medicine. Etc. Generate several with your Trickster and other colleagues in advance of this activity. Have these cards reflect real possibilities in your community.

After the market closes debrief the experience with participants inviting reflections and observations. What were parents able to provide for their children? What kinds of exchanges happened in the market? What feelings were evoked and why? How does this relate to the actual experiences of raising children in our society today? Can we name the people in our society who benefit or are disadvantaged in this market model?

Now...try remixing this activity! If the energy is there in your group, invite them to try improvising an artful, innovative & sustainable market model that benefits everyone. Is it possible? Try this using the same characters developed previously. Stop, rejig & restart whenever the group perceives a new direction is necessary to find a meaningful strategy. You may also try this in forum theatre style! \*See model here: If theatre doesn't resonate try having participants illustrate a model with drawing materials on paper. Or embody a model in a series of collaborative human sculptures! Be sure to take pictures if everyone consents!

# The Pyramid Project.

LEVEL 3 | TIME: 40 to 60 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Space for breakaway group work doing writing & drawing work, flip charts, writing utensils.

Split participants into small groups. Each group will receive one of the following institutions: 1. School/education system. 2. Real estate/housing/land ownership. 3. Business/jobs/corporations. 4. Criminal justice/prison system. 5. Organized sports. 6. History books. 7. Government. 8. Banks/financial institutions.

Ask groups to answer the following questions:

- Who is at the top in this pyramid? This can include those people or organizations who have the most wealth within the institution (e.g. the highest paid people who work in the institution), as well as whom the institution most supports, most protects and keeps wealthy (e.g. who the institution benefits or works for most). Write names of at the apex of the pyramid.
- Who is at the bottom of this pyramid? This can include both who is poorest (lowest paid or non-paid people who work in the institution), as well as whom the institution most excludes or keeps poor or makes invisible. Write the names on the bottom of the pyramid.
- How are the people who are lower in the pyramid “exploited” by or made to work for or serve or provide profit for those who are higher? Write answers across the middle of the pyramid.
- What ways does the institution work to hide or cover up class differences, or “distract” people from seeing class differences that we’re not all on a “level playing field”. Write answers along right and left sides of the pyramids.
- What are possible ways this institution could (and sometimes does) work against classism to promote equality?
- Considerations for Living on the Pyramid: People can decide in various ways to live in the pyramid by Getting ahead, Getting by, Getting back at it, Getting out.
- Brainstorm “Upsetting the set-up” (consider in relation to food, safety, work, school, children & elders, Voice of the people). If people decide to “get” in this particular way, what do they do? How might they relate to other people “above” them in the pyramid? Below them? Side by side, like family members and friends? Given the structure of the pyramid, what is likely to happen to them?

\*Invite groups to present back their findings in a creative and artful way (whatever mediums they like!). To begin to undo the damage caused by classism, it is useful for everyone to examine their own feelings about money, education, privilege, power, relationships, culture, ethnicity as they function in society. \*Activity assembled by Joce Tremblay

# Resources.

## Classism:

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classism>
- <http://www.classism.org/self-awareness>
- <http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/about/index.html>

## Kanye West on 'Classism' and Self Hate

- <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=classism>

## Marxism:

- <http://www.sociology.org.uk/as4i4c1.pdf>

## Poverty:

- <http://www.cwp-csp.ca/>
- <http://www.ocap.ca/>

## The Black Panther Party:

- <http://www.itsabouttimebpp.com/home/home.html>

## Justice For Migrant Workers:

- <http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org/>
- <http://www.migrantworkersrights.net/en/actors/migrant-justice-network>

## Forum Theatre:

- <http://www.slideshare.net/openstagetheater/guide-to-forum-theater>
- <http://theforumproject.org/whatisto/forumtheatre/>

## Great Critical Analysis & based in Canada!

- <http://rabble.ca/>

The background of the image is a green-tinted architectural blueprint. It shows various floor plans, including a large rectangular area with a dashed oval inside, possibly representing a sports court or a large room. There are several pens and pencils scattered across the blueprint, suggesting a design or planning process. The overall aesthetic is professional and technical.

# *Allyship & Accountability*



# ACCOUNTABILITY: HOW TO MESS UP WITHOUT BEING THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD!

## SECTION CO-WRITTEN WITH ANNA MALLA & LEAH LAKSHMI-PIEPZNA

**Accountability** is a big word. When I looked it up (even though I have been working on community accountability and transformative justice work for the past 15 years) it basically said that it meant taking responsibility for having caused harm.

**Community Accountability** is a term feminists of color have created to describe ways of holding folks who have caused harm accountable for what they've done, and creating healing, safety and justice for those who have been harmed by them, without mostly relying on the state- prisons, police, courts, Children's Aid, etc. We started doing this work when we realized that for many people, the police and criminal legal system actually make us less safe.

Just a few examples of this:

- The ways police have refused to act to keep missing and murdered Indigenous women safe.
- Multiple women experienced sexual harassment and assault from journalist Jian Ghomeshi over a decade. Until Jian was fired from the CBC in 2014, none of them felt comfortable going to the police with charges. One woman who courageously shared her story on the website XoJane received many death threats.
- In 2012, Marissa Alexander, a black mother in Florida, was arrested after she fired a warning shot to prevent her husband from continuing to attack her. Her husband left the house and called the police. She was arrested and, although he had not been injured, prosecuted for aggravated assault. Alexander argued that her actions were justified under Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law. Unlike George Zimmerman, the man who shot and killed seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin three months earlier, Alexander was unsuccessful in using that defense. Despite her husband's sixty-six-page deposition, in which he admitted abusing Alexander as well as the other women with whom he had children, a jury still found her guilty and sentenced her to twenty years in prison.



- A 2012 study conducted by the Young Women’s Empowerment Project, an organization of young women and trans people involved in Chicago sex trade and street economies, found that the primary place young people experienced violence was from the police- not from pimps or partners. Police accounted for 30% of the violence faced by young as opposed to 4% from pimps. Queer and trans young people of color faced the most violence. The study also found that violence from institutions made violence from individuals worse- when a young person was raped and tried to report it, for example, to the police or a hospital and was blamed for their violence they’d survived, or not taken seriously.

The work to create working alternatives to a system that fails us is a long-term struggle. And, as First Nations feminist writer Andrea Smith says, “In order to create community accountability, you can’t assume that the community even exists.” A lot of the time, you have to create communities that know how to talk to each other about really hard things first, and how to hold each other with both love and justice.



Image by Jenna Peters-Golden

The criminal legal system’s ways of thinking about punishment get in our heads in terms of how we know how to treat each other. My friend Morgan Bassichis is an amazing queer and trans anti violence organizer. I remember sitting in a workshop she was doing on healthy queer/trans relationships at Safetyfest, an annual conference/festival around queer/trans safety and power. She said to us, “What happens when you’re a kid and you break a window playing ball?” Everyone said, you either lie about it, or you tell the truth and get punished. Morgan nodded and asked, “So what happens when you’re an adult and you break a window?”

People said, you either lie about it (get a good lawyer, put up a great defense), or tell the truth and go to jail. Then she asked, “So, how does all this affect us when we screw up and hurt our partners, or our friends?” And there was a collective ooohhhhhhhh in the room.

Right? When we screw up, we either think we’re the worst person in the world, or we get defensive and come up with a million reasons

**Punitive justice** is the system we have- the cops, courts, etc. When someone harms in this set up, they are arrested. Depending on their access to race, class, gender, and disability privileges, allowing them to be ‘credible’ and to access good legal help, they get punished, or not.

**Restorative justice** is something that's been tried some places. It usually takes place within a system- a school or court. In restorative justice, the idea is that things should be restored to how they were before the harm got caused. The problem is, sometimes the way things were to begin with weren't so great. For example, restorative justice has been used against youth who are doing graffiti the youth paint over it and apologize. But what if nothing is wrong with graffiti as a youth art form?

**Transformative Justice** works to transform the conditions that made the harm happen in the first place. Transformative justice says, it's not enough to take things back to the way they were. If we don't transform rape culture, poverty, whore-phobia and prisons, violence that comes from them will keep happening.

The groundbreaking grassroots organization 'Generation 5' defines the goals of Transformative Justice as:

- Safety, healing, and agency for survivors
- Accountability and transformation for people who harm
- Community action, healing, and accountability
- Transformation of the social conditions that perpetuate violence – systems of oppression and exploitation, domination, and state violence
- Transformative Justice invites us to ask:
- How do we build our personal and collective capacity to respond to trauma and support accountability in a transformative way?
- How do we shift power towards collective liberation?
- How do we build effective and sustainable movements that are grounded in resilience and life-affirming power?

(See more at <http://www.generationfive.org/the-issue/transformative-justice/>)



# When Have You Screwed Up?

LEVEL 1 | TIME: 10 to 30 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Flexible space and materials including: Tables & chairs for participants, papers, cardboard, writing utensils, scissors, glue, crafting materials etc.

In pairs or on your own, take a minute to think about a time when someone hurt you. Pick something that's not super intense or triggering.

Think about:

- How did you feel?
- What did those feelings feel like in your body?
- What did you want or need from the person(s) who hurt you to feel better and make it right?

You can write down your thoughts or share them with your partner

Part 2: This one is a little harder. Think about a time when you harmed someone. Again, don't pick the most intense thing you've ever done. Ask yourself:

- How did it feel?
- What did those feelings feel like in your body?
- What did you need or want in order to be able to make things right, and to change your behavior?

Create a mock card to the person(s) you hurt acknowledging your mistakes and apologizing. Use craft and arts materials to decorate the card cover with good intentions. You might choose to actually gift the card, keep it as personal reminder, or destroy it in a meaningful way with intentions of transformation.

## Safety Shield.

LEVEL 2 | TIME: Unlimited. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Flexible space and materials including: Drawing & writing materials that you like!

In pairs or on your own, take a minute to think about a time when someone hurt you. Pick something that's not super intense or triggering.

Part 1: On a piece of construction paper, draw a shield (you can make this look any way you want, it doesn't have to look like Game of Thrones.) Divide into four sections.

The sections represent:

- A person or community who supports and loves you
- Something you can do to help yourself heal and feel better when triggered
- Something that other people can do to help you feel better when triggered
- The reason why you are choosing to do this work

Make it beautiful! You can drop different flower essences or sew different protective herbs into it. When you're done, share with a friend.

### Some things to think about:

When under stress, your body goes into an automatic state of fight, flight, freeze, appease or dissociate. These states are part of the limbic brain and reptile brain, which are two of the oldest parts of the brain. It was around when humans first started to become human, and helped us outrun saber toothed tigers and other stresses by automatically flooding our body with adrenaline, or hormones that help us play dead.

Somatic healer Vanissar Tarakali created these practices she calls "HEY for Holding, Escape and Yes, that you can use to ground if your body is feeling unsafe. "Safety means giving your body experiences of feeling safe, where your body feels protected and/or able to take care of itself," she says. "Holding means giving your body a feeling of being held, of having a sense of boundary, of beginning and end. You can give yourself this feeling with or without props.

You can use blankets, pillows, eye-bags or sandbags, a wall, the floor, or water to give your body a sense of being held. You could put a sandbag on your chest, or hide under a pile of pillows, get in a warm bath and feel the water holding your skin, or wrap yourself in blankets. You can wear a thick scarf or hoodie and feel the coziness. Notice which parts of your body like being held the most, and notice how you feel when you allow yourself to really rest inside that holding.

You can also give yourself a sense of holding without props. You can push your arms against your sides; push your legs together; cradle your arm(s) around your head, push your feet against a wall, and notice where you begin and end. Do each of these gently but firmly for at least five seconds, then pause and repeat. Notice which of these practices feel good to you.

## ESCAPE

Escape means checking out or shutting down consciously. We all have habits that we use to soothe or distract ourselves. Eating ice cream, drinking caffeine, sleeping too much, watching TV, self-medicating, working too much, etc. While they have unpleasant side effects that limit our lives and our ability to be in relationship with others, these habits are survival strategies that have successfully gotten us through hard times.

The first part of Escape is bringing an appreciative attitude toward your habit. When a habit is so automatic, it means that we have practiced this strategy thousands of times (because at some point we had good reason to). As a result of all this practice, this habit is now a highly developed skill. For example, if I find myself constantly daydreaming during stressful situations, it means I am an accomplished, world-class daydreamer. I deserve a gold medal in dissociation! At some point it was a smart thing to do (otherwise I wouldn't have practiced it so much), and now I am really good at it!

The second part of Escape is to view your habits pragmatically. Think of each habit or survival strategy as one of your tools. See them as reliable back up practices. Give yourself permission to use them when you need to, and use them consciously. If you practice this way, eventually you will own and operate your survival strategies as tools (instead of being owned by them). You will be able to choose when and how you use (or don't use) these tools.

The third part of Escape is to choose and practice healthy and sustainable tools (ones without unpleasant side effects), so that you have a sense of options. Eventually you might not need to use the unhealthy tools except when they are the best tools for the situation.

YES means collaborating with whatever your body is doing. Here is how it works:

When you find areas of contraction or tension in your body, say “yes” to them. Give them the benefit of the doubt, and tell you trust they are working hard to take care of you. Tell them they are doing a good job! As you say yes, gently increase the tension or holding for a few seconds. Act like you and your body are a team, doing something important together. See what happens when you join with your body appreciatively instead of fighting it...the body always feels safer when we appreciate and support its efforts. Often with safety comes softening.

## PRACTICE

The principle of practice encompasses both action and attitude. Practice as action involves doing something over and over until it “comes naturally.” Practice as attitude means practicing is the focus (not achievement).

You need to practice something at least 300 times for it to become familiar, and 3000 times for the practice to become part of you.

If this seems like a lot, ask yourself how many times you have practiced putting on your shoes. How many times have you practiced criticizing yourself (yet another thing that stimulates the fight or flight response)?

Try out the above practices briefly and often. Brief, daily practices are more effective than long, occasional practice. The key is repetition over time. The more we practice, the more these practices become speed dial buttons that allow us to recover our grounding and sense of safety very quickly.

Keep your practice light. Bring curiosity and exploration into your practice. Practice to discover which techniques your body likes best, and then give your body these gifts as often as possible.

Bring curiosity and exploration into your practice. Practice to discover which techniques your body likes best, and then give your body these gifts as often as possible. Practice is an ordinary, often unconscious part of life that you can turn into a conscious choice. Each day set the intention to practice what you want to be; when you practice you are the sculptor sculpting yourself. What you practice is what you embody. And it is a way to create good karma.”

Part 2: Think about which of the HEY practices you want to try. Write them down- in a list you can post on your wall or keep in your wallet, in your phone, on small cards you can keep in a box. Try practicing one or some of them. Report back to a partner how it felt.

All of this stuff may make you feel like “why, I just want to CONFRONT RAPE or NOT BE A JERK” but the thing is, doing this stuff actually is really intense and means developing and practicing emotional skills to be able to be in intense environments all the time. After Jian Ghomeshi was fired, a lot of folks came forward saying that they’d known he was violent to women he dated for a while, and a lot of folks were like, why didn’t anyone confront him? And that’s a good question to honestly ask. Why didn’t they? And, what would have made it possible for them to intervene?

## Transformative Justice Listening Party.

LEVEL 1 | TIME: Unlimited. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Flexible space and materials including: Internet connection, computer with audio playback & audio recording functions.

Listen to one of the stories the Storytelling and Organizing Project collected about how folks intervened in violence. <http://www.stopviolenceeveryday.org/stories/Afterwards>, talk in a small group about what you thought. What was inspiring? What did you feel was complicated or you disagreed with? Could you see yourself using any of these tactics? Why or why not?

Next level: Write a short story with your group about a Transformative Justice method or strategy you think could work to address a conflict you might imagine happening in your working group or community. Create an audio recording of this story that can be shared with your group & community for inspiration!

## Freedom Dreams.

LEVEL 3 | TIME: Unlimited. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Open space, papers, and markers.

On your own or in a small group, brainstorm common situations of harm that come up in your community, Then, pick one, and brainstorm ways to intervene. Make a short skit illustrating how you would do this and present it to the group. You could use this as a Forum Theatre theme as well!

If you are stuck, look at the resource list in this section for some amazing resources and ideas. Everyday Abolition, Creative Interventions Toolkit and Philly Stands Up, in particular, have concrete resources and stories you can check out.



## How To Mess Up.

LEVEL 2 | TIME: 40 to 90 minutes. WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Open, room for performances, room for breakaway groups. Materials can include: Paper, markers, props as needed.

Because you probably will, at some point in your life...Since it's likely that you're going to fuck up, in some way, at some time, why not do it with grace and aplomb?

Me? -- I think that I "Mess up" daily.

For me, currently, my main areas of "fucking up" are: Acting towards other beings in ways that I wouldn't want them to act toward me, not upholding or adhering to my own principles, not practicing what I preach, not walking my talk, etc. . . . . oh, just a thousand different things or so.

Remaining conscious and consistent can be real hard sometimes.

However, I really want to remain conscious and I want to be consistent to my own principles and ethics. For me, that is the definition of personal integrity. If your personal goals/values/ethics/principles in life are different from mine, I have no problem with that -- honestly. Still, I'm guessing that, even if your goals, principles, and ethical standards differ from mine, it's likely that you might "Mess up" with your own stuff every now and again.

I have a little tool that I call "The Four A's" (from an absolutely fantastic teacher) and it has helped me through numerous mess-ups in my life.

When you "Mess Up" (whether minor or major) practice the "Four A's":

- Acknowledgment
- Apology
- Amends
- Action

**Acknowledgment** - is really important, IMO, because if you don't realize what you actually did, and how it was "Messed up", there's a high probability that you are going to do it again -- a very high probability.

**Apology** - is also really important - but it has to be genuine (which requires #1 Acknowledgment). Saying things like “I’m sorry if you felt bad about what I said/ wrote” or “I’m sorry if your feelings got hurt”, is completely different from saying “I’m sorry that I said/wrote that. I see how it was problematic, and here’s how I know that it was messed up...” (Keep in mind that “if” is a word reserved for hypothetical’s, and doesn’t usually refer to real life. When used in apology, “if” is usually just a dilutive, and if you can’t really apologize, then don’t apologize at all. Sort of a perverse Thumper ethic.)

**Amends** - sometimes the energy required to actually think about how you messed up and make an honest acknowledgment/apology is enough to return balance to the situation (depends on the type of mess up, though). In some cases, “making amends” might also mean returning money/energy/time that your mess-up created for someone else. This can be returned in any of a number of creative ways.

**Action** - This may be the most important of the 4 A’s. If you know that you did something that was hurtful, and you’ve expressed that you’re genuinely sorry that you did this messed up thing, then really, the only concrete evidence of this will be that you will change what you do in the future. For me, if I don’t take this step (action), the other three are just so much manipulation.

If you’re thinking, “Well, if #4 is so important, and is really the critical thing, why bother with the other three?” Just trust me on this and try steps 1-3 out in real time. I’ve found them to be amazing, when combined with step 4. There is nothing . . . nothing! . . . that melts my heart more than a heart felt acknowledgment, apology, and offer of amends.

Not only that, but taking steps #1-#3 before moving into step #4 actually tends to make step #4 easier for me. If I know the other person now knows that I know that I messed up, and that I felt bad about messing up, and if I know that my mess-ups have consequences (as in the amends I made), somehow taking a different action becomes so much more . . . what’s the word I’m looking for? . . . . . Motivational?

#### **Next level:**

In small groups brainstorm a scenario when someone has messed up and caused harm. Work through an approach for making amends using the 4 A’s that can be woven into a performance or skit. The amend making can be creative and include direct conversation, letter writing, art making etc. Then present your scenario and ‘Amends Making’ strategy to the whole group. *What strategies were used? Can they work in our communities and relationships? What ways can we be artful and heartfelt in our apologies?*

## Lots more resources!

- The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Intimate Violence in Activist Communities. Is currently out of print due to press closing, but you can find copies in libraries and online. [http://incitenational.org/sites/default/files/incite\\_files/resource\\_docs/0985\\_revolution-starts-at-home.pdf](http://incitenational.org/sites/default/files/incite_files/resource_docs/0985_revolution-starts-at-home.pdf)
- Incite-National has a ton of resources and handouts, including older ones from the early 2000s, all lead by feminists of color. Details: <http://www.incite-national.org/page/community-accountability->
- Toronto Community Housing Accountability and Transformative Justice Study Group, reading lists. Details: <http://transformativejusticetoronto.blogspot.ca/2011/06/toronto-learning-to-action-community.html>
- Bay-Area Child Care Collective; Wizards Around the Rainbow an amazing zine on how one could bring up these principles in childcare and parenting work. Details: <https://bayareachildcarecollective.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/wizards-around-the-rainbow-v2.pdf>
- Journal of Social Justice, resource bank. Details: [www.communityaccountability.wordpress.com/resources/](http://www.communityaccountability.wordpress.com/resources/)
- Project Nia, a community based social justice model in Chicago between youth and police. Details: <http://www.project-nia.org/chain-reaction.php>
- Bell Bajao, an amazing campaign out of India that uses videos to show people how we can intervene in creative ways when domestic violence occurs. Details: <http://www.bellbajao.org/> amazing Indian campaign
- Everyday Abolition, <http://everydayabolition.com/>
- The Creative Intervention Toolkit, a resource for stopping interpersonal violence. Details: <http://www.creative-interventions.org/tools/toolkit/>
- Storytelling Organizing Project (STOP), audio stories of peoples experiences when they intervened in stopping violence. <http://www.stopviolenceeveryday.org/stories/>
- The Portrait of Praxis, article which gets real nitty gritty about how they work with perpetrators. Details: <http://www.phillystandsup.com/resources.html>

## Conclusion...

Likely you're feeling all kinds of things in response to this process of learning. Hopefully you are able to see yourself as part of a larger and ever growing movement of people and communities doing social justice work in North America and all around the world. For many forms of social injustice there are groups mobilizing to raise awareness and advocate for change. With the advent of social media communities are even more effective at staying connected, reporting on oppression, talking about the effects of discrimination, rallying support, organizing events, sharing useful resources, and lobbying institutions. Remember you are not alone. Connect to issues and initiatives that you feel personally connected to. Build relationships of solidarity and support with communities you are not a part of. Learn to see the connections and intersections between different struggles and movements. Work to create social justice initiatives that are universally accessible. Tell your story artfully and support others to do the same. Allow yourself to feel the emotions that this work brings up, and aspire to let this to motivate you.

*Advocate:* Demand equity and human rights for yourself, your community and in your workplace.

*Allyship:* Build meaningful relationships of support with grassroots movements that you are not a part of. Aim to understand the connections between different struggles. Always ask what others need in terms of support.

*Accompliceship:* Whenever possible, stand alongside folks on the frontlines. Don't just read a book or "like" someone's social media, show up and roll up your sleeves!

### **Anthologies of Resistance:**

Map the creative acts of resistance and resilience of one or many marginalized communities internationally. Start with communities you are a member of or live alongside. This is a way of learning or reconnecting to histories that have been marginalized, silenced or erased. It is also a way to challenge or complicate the histories more often told which center the perspectives and contributions of privileged, ruling & dominant groups. Most importantly it is a way to celebrate the work communities have done to resist and live resiliently in the face of oppression!

Throughout history specific groups of marginalized peoples have organized to raise awareness about their particular experiences of oppression and to advocate for resources and political change based on their distinct needs.



What are some human rights groups you're aware of and what have been some of the specific issues they have worked to address? How has the world changed because of their work? Who are some of the artists participating in these movements and how did they use art to raise awareness or create social change?

Check out groups like "Idle No More", "Black Lives Matter" and many other contemporary groups working in Canada and largely organize by young people! Learn about their histories, work, artistic approaches and the political contexts they've emerged in. What kinds of changes to law, policy, social ideologies and practices have transpired as a result of this work?

**What can be learned from this work? - How have the arts played a role? - How can you get involved?!**



# Glossary of Terms

**Affirmative action** (known as employment equity in Canada) is the policy and practice of intentionally creating opportunities for members of marginalized groups to participate more equitably in society and to counter the many unequal barriers they face. This could include: more diverse outreach, pay equity, more targeted opportunities to upgrade skills, opportunities to progress in the workplace, improved worker benefits etc.

**Apartheid:** Apartheid is Afrikaans (one of the official languages in South Africa) for “the state of being apart”. It was a system of racial segregation in South Africa that existed from 1948-1994. Similar to the Jim Crow Laws, the ideology of Apartheid saw the removal of rights and freedom for black, “coloured” (people of mixed origin) and Indian people. During this era all public services were segregated, with inferior service being provided to people of colour.

**Assimilation:** This is a process of changing your culture, language and ideology to resemble those of another group. For example immigrants often change characteristics about themselves so that can fit in with the rest of society. This is not often done by choice, but because immigrants do not want to face xenophobia which is the hatred or fear of foreigners by citizens of the country. Persons that are successful at assimilating often receive rewards in society such as inclusion or citizenship.

**ASL:** American Sign Language is a visually observed language that includes hand gestures along with facial expressions, and other body movements. It is one of many visually observed languages that are used by people that are deaf to verbal communication, especially in North America. It has its own unique grammatical rules and sentence structure.

**Binary:** In technical terms, this refers to something composed of two parts. When used to describe the Gender Binary, this refers to the classification of sex and gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’.

**Criminalization:** Refers when certain behaviors, cultures, or identities are transformed into a crime as they are seen as outside of the norm or deviant. For example in many states in the US, marijuana is still criminalized. Or for example, the ways that sex work and sex workers are criminalized and thus targeted by the police rather than being protected.

**Consent:** To give permission for something to happen or making an agreement to do something. In order to be accountable to others and not cause harm it is important to seek their consent before taking action.

**Consensus:** A general agreement about something. It’s an idea or opinion that is shared by all people in a group. Consensus Building refers to a process of decision-making that seeks the consent of all stakeholders.

**Critical:** Being critical means exercising careful analysis and judgment. Critical theory is a point of view that emphasizes that we reflect on society by applying knowledge from the social sciences.

**Cultural Appropriation:** This occurs when people of another culture adopt various aspects of a person's culture. Persons of the dominant group in society tend to do this to oppressed groups, appropriating music, dance, religions, symbols, objects, ways of speaking. These elements are then used by the dominant group out of the original context. For example this is often seen around Halloween in North America where people who are not native, dress in traditional native wear.

**Cultural Competency:** This is the ability to interact well with persons from different cultures and even socio-economic backgrounds. To do this effectively, one needs to be aware of their own cultural worldview, which comes with its specific ideologies, be aware of different cultural practices and cultural differences.

**Diaspora:** This refers to a group of people with a shared ancestry or who are from the same geographic area, but who are spread out around the world. The Palestinian diaspora for example is made up of communities of Palestinians who live outside of Palestine.

**Discourse:** A written and spoken communication. For example, "Anti-Oppression discourse" would include verbal dialogue, workshops, online resources, books and even media discussing Anti-O.

**Economic System:** A system of production and exchange of goods and services as well as the allocation of resources in society. This includes the combination of institutions, agencies, sectors and consumers that uphold the economic structure.

**Entitlement:** This is the feeling or belief that you have a right to have, to do something or the belief that you deserve to be given something. Entitlement stems from a feeling of privilege or immunity or a special right.

**Fair Trade:** An organized social movement whose stated goal is to help producers in developing countries achieve better trading conditions and to promote sustainability. Members of the movement advocate for the payment of higher prices to exporters, as well as higher social and environmental standards.

**Globalization:** A process of interaction and integration among the people, companies and governments of different nations. This process is driven by international trade, investment and information technology. It has effect on the environments, cultures, politics, economics, development and human well being of societies around the world.

**Grassroots:** Refers to a movement driven by a community's politics and issues. The term implies that the creation of the movement and the group supporting it are natural and spontaneous. These movements operate at the local level, often volunteer based and led by, for and with the people. These movements are not governmental or led by the ruling minority.

**Identity Politics:** Refers to political arguments that focus upon the interests and perspectives of specific groups with which people identify. This also includes the ways in which people's politics may be shaped by aspects of their identity through loosely related social organizations. For example, the "Queer Community".

**Ideology:** Ideology includes all doctrines, norms, belief and even myths that guide a system, country, social movement and individual. Democracy is an example of a political ideology and racism can be seen as a social and cultural ideology.

**Imperialism:** Refers to a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military force, or other violent or manipulative means. For example, the United Kingdom established colonies and eventually overtook the governing structures in many places like India, Canada, South Africa, Belize, Trinidad etc. The wealth and resources extracted from these places were then shipped back to the UK.

**Jim Crow laws:** The Jim Crow laws existed in the United States of America from 1892 to 1965 and enforced racial segregation. Examples of such laws include segregated areas for whites and blacks in all public spaces such as schools, restaurants and hospitals and bans on interracial marriage. In some states there were even specific laws pertaining to the segregation of Chinese people as well. Consequences for breaking these laws included fines and even imprisonment. The Jim Crow Laws can be closely compared to Apartheid in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The Jim Crow Laws can also be compared to The Indian Act in Canada, which was established in 1857 and still exists today with amendments. The Indian Act has been described as invasive and paternalistic towards Native people as it limits them from having full autonomy or being able to make their own decisions and act independently. One famous example of an oppressive law under the Indian Act was the Potlatch Law of 1884, which banned Native people from performing traditional ceremonies. Other oppressive laws included the institution of Residential Schools for Native children ripped them from their families and stripped them of their culture.

**Othered:** This means being different from the norm or mainstream and often comes with social consequences like exclusion. For example immigrants often feel othered, being made fun of for the way they dress, act or speak. The othering diminishes when people assimilate.

**Paradigm:** Is a distinct concept, thought pattern, or worldview. In social sciences, the term is used to describe the set of experiences, beliefs and values that affect the way an individual perceives reality and responds to that perception. "Paradigm Shift" implies the act of change in how a society goes about organizing and understanding reality. For example, the main objective of this toolkit is supporting a social paradigm shift in which human differences are celebrated, equity is central in sharing resources, and self determination is accessible to everyone!

**Pedagogy:** This is the theory and practice of education or the praxis of education and looks at the best ways to teach. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator examined the relationship between teacher, student and society in his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and proposed that we do not see students as empty vessels but as co-creators of knowledge. Pedagogy to Freire includes assessing power imbalances and its impact on students who have been historically disenfranchised or oppressed.

**Praxis:** This is a balance between theory and practice, where the individual gets to embody or apply the concepts that they learned. Paulo Freire discussed praxis in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, saying that it is a great way for people to learn and to achieve freedom.



**Racialized:** The process of ascribing ethnic or racial identities to a relationship, social practice, or group of people that do not necessarily identify as such. It is often born out of the interactions between minority groups and a group that dominates and ascribes identities to others for the purpose of continued domination. For example, The racialization of labor in which workers are hired or segregated based on perceived ethnic difference.

**Reparations:** Compensation or making amends for wrongdoing, abuse, injury or injustice. Historically reparations were demanded for war damages and could be material as well as symbolic. For example the government of Canada issued an apology to the Native community for the Residential Schools program as well as provided a \$350 million fund to help those affected by the schools. Today it is acknowledged that for reparations to truly make amends for violations of human rights it must be accompanied by prosecution, truth-seeking and institutional change.

**Settler:** Settlers are those who are not native to a country or area but migrated and established residence. Often settlers colonize the area they inhabit, imposing their own ideology and displacing the original inhabitants of the land. This is the history of the natives of North America, they were colonized by the Europeans and displaced from the land.

**Solidarity:** This is when people with privilege, or those who are part of a dominant group in society show empathize with and support and create allyship with people in society who face oppression. Solidarity can also be between oppressed groups who realize the connected nature of oppression. For example the Black Lives Matter Movement showing solidarity for the Free Gaza Movement.

**Sweatshops:** This is a pejorative (expressing disapproval) term for a workplace that has socially unacceptable working conditions. The work may be difficult, dangerous or be paid a wage that is not fair. Workers in 'sweatshops' often work long hours for low wages, regardless of laws mandating overtime pay, or minimum wage. Child labor laws may also be violated.

**State:** A state is an organized community occupying a definite territory, living under one government. Many societies have been governed by states for centuries.

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