

# **MOVING** FORWARD

Information for when you want to be more actively involved in working to better your community or change public policy

## Author's Note

Moving Forward is a zine for people who are interested in activism, community building, and social justice. My hope is to provide inspiration and tips on how to be more actively engaged in work that improves our communities and directly impacts our futures. My goal was to answer the question “but what else can we do?”. Please take what is useful from this guide and use it to your benefit. Everything written here is open-source, so it is free to share, as long as it is done with good intentions. In writing this I hope only to help compassionate people organize their thoughts about this type of work. This is not, by any means, a rule book.

I do recommend that folks who are about to get their feet wet in community based work, or even those who already are, to please look up basic cultural and organizing etiquette (whatever is relevant to the work you want to do) so that you are more up-to-date on what is and is not considered harmful. Of course you can also learn as you go, but a little education beforehand usually benefits all involved. It might save you some embarrassment and it might save someone else some hurt feelings.



# Show up, show up, show up

Critical Mass, when we talk about Activism and Organizing, is when we have enough people participating in our action that our action has a direct benefit. For example, we hit critical mass when enough people protest or boycott that it causes lawmakers to change their minds about an unjust bill they were about to pass.

One of the things, with the smallest mental load, that we can do to support social change is just show up. We don't always have to be the leader, organizer, or volunteer. Sometimes just showing up to an action someone else has organized is powerful enough in and of itself.

Also, this does not just apply to large-scale actions. Showing up to art exhibits, music shows, theatre productions, academic speeches, graduations, awards ceremonies and etc... of people in our direct community is powerful. It models the society we want to exist in and gives the person we are supporting the confidence to continue their good work and sit in their joy.

## Anxious?

It's okay to attend an event, protest, conference or etc... for just 15 minutes. Maybe not a board meeting but in a lot of circumstances you can internally commit to yourself to just show up, say hi, and leave. That often feels a lot easier to do than commit to an entire event. Then, if you end up wanting to stay longer...go ahead!

**Note:** You can also 'show up' as an official representative of your coalition to give it credibility.



# Survey Your Area

---

When getting involved in any type of activism, community building, service work, or direct action it is super important to gather information about your community. This will help you build resources but it will also make sure that the work you are doing is impactful and not harming people in your community.

## Find Out:

- Who are the most vulnerable populations in your community, what are their needs \*as stated by them\*, and what neighborhoods do they live in?
- What services exist to aid people struggling in your community? Specifically do these resources offer in-practice what they say they do on their websites, are they full, and what barriers exist to accessing them?
- What activist and volunteer groups already exist in your community? Cultural Centers, Antifa, Food not B\*mb, Food Pantries, Activist Organization and etc.
- What legal resources exist that help targeted populations? And how are they accessed?
- Is public transportation accessible and how much does it cost? If you host meetings how will people get to them?
- What third spaces exist for you to gather and host events or meetings at and how much do they cost? Is there anything free? Are the spaces accessible?
- What laws actively target people in your community and who is responsible for upholding them?
- Are there any recognized tribes in, or near, your community? Is there a reservation that is accessible?



**Note:** You can add to the list but this gives you an idea of where to start. P.S. If you get stuck, ask on social media.

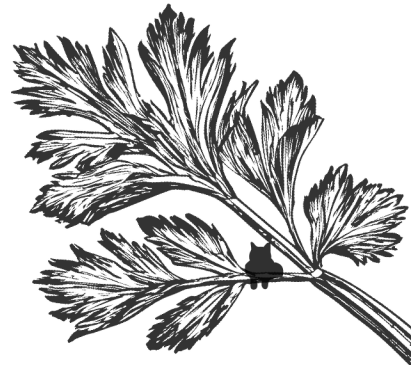
# Hold Space for Grief and Conversation

---

When tragedy happens, people are suffering, or people are sitting in fear they are going to need to process those emotions. One of the most human things we can do is gather and hear each other out. Indigenous people have been doing this for thousands of years using something we call the “talking circle”. It is a practice replicated in many classrooms and cultures globally. Even if there is no follow up that results from the gathering, allowing people to feel seen reduces suffering, reduces suicides, and increases hope.

## To-Do List:

- Find a gathering space
- Set a day and time to gather
- Advertise
- Set up the space to be welcoming (best done with chairs in a circle)
- Start by setting ground rules for sharing
- You share first
- Give everyone else space to share how they are feeling
- Follow up with specific questions if appropriate
- Send around an email/signal sheet for folks who want to stay in touch for friendship, service work, or direct action
- Thank everyone for coming and clean up



**Note:** Can include traditional grief elements such as a candle light vigil, a reading of names of the deceased, performance art or etc before the sharing circle starts. Can include a potluck. Can decompress at end with a game, hike, or movie.

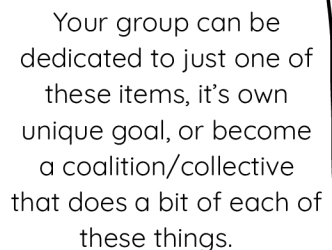
# Consider Your Inspiration

People organize for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways. Although this list is written with a focus on groups, you can do many of these activities solo, or with just a buddy, if you prefer.

- A wholesale buyer group
- A barter group
- A grief support group
- A crisis response team
- A community defense team
- An Antifa cohort
- A land and water protector collective
- A prison letter writing group
- A food (and supply) distribution group
- Abortion doula or clinic escort cohort
- A housing and homelessness coalition/mutual aid group
- A group dedicated to putting on pop-up festivals
- A group dedicated to creating an annual cultural festival
- A bail support group
- A skill share group/ free school
- A union support team
- A court support team
- A group focused on elder and child support
- A group dedicated to helping out protest organizers
- A medic group
- A political group

## **A List of Basic Human Needs**

(that some people like to organize around): food, water, shelter, air, safety, friendship, hygiene, healthcare, financial security, justice, clothing, education, joy



Your group can be dedicated to just one of these items, it's own unique goal, or become a coalition/collective that does a bit of each of these things.

# Be Honest About Your Anxiety



If you are nervous know you are in good company. Remember, you are not alone on this journey and your courage is deeply appreciated. Some tips:

- Get involved with a buddy, a lot of things are less scary when you are not alone.
- Remind yourself you can leave, or stop hosting, an event at anytime. Even if it is awkward. You do not have to stay in activist spaces that are not suited to you. Create an exit excuse (if you feel you need one) in advance.
- Start small. Perhaps agree to a single simple volunteer task that has a clear end point.
- Share something. It is SO much easier to make friends when we share something with others. Food, Art, Our Hobby, A Cool Experience.
- Sample. Go to a bunch of different events, for a short period of time, and see what feels good to you. Return to the spaces that felt welcoming and/or take elements from them to apply to your own organizing.
- Remember that we all experience insecurity, including the new people you are going to be around. If your nerves get bad but you want to stay try picturing folks as the little kids they once were. It can help us to remember that we are all equals and in this together. You can also try mental math. It activates a part of the brain that decenters anxiety.
- Speak up. Anxiety is not shameful. It is ok to share the burden by speaking about it or asking directly for accommodations.

**If someone accuses you of acting inappropriately say:** “thanks for bringing this to my attention, I need time to think this over” then go do your research on the proper way to respond. It is OK to not know how to respond in the moment. Stay kind even if you are in the right. Respond later when you aren’t in your emotions.

# Join or Start a Group

---

We build community by being in community. Joining a group is relatively easy. And it is really important to do because you gain experience NOT being in control. It is really important that we all learn how to let others, who are our equals, lead.

Starting a group is a bit more complicated but it allows you the freedom to build pockets of community where it isn't already served. If you don't "fit" with any of the existing groups then you can build your own. People crave folks who will organize space for them. They will show up.

## **Starting a Group:** Decide -

- What you will build your group around.  
A goal? An ideal? A specific group of people?
- On a space. Is it accessible? Can it be a regular space?
- On a day and time. Groups work better when held weekly (monthly also works). Folks need to be able to say Wednesdays at 6pm, or 1st Wednesdays at 6pm, I go to my group meeting at this set space.
- How you will run your meeting. People do not want to show up to an unplanned event. They want freedom to be in community as they are, but with structure. This can be adapted to meet the needs of the group over time. Be open to changing this once your group is established.
- What background distraction you can provide. Food? Legos and Coloring Books? A lot of folks feel more comfortable with something to focus their anxiety into.
- How you will Advertise. Flyers? FB Events?
- How you will handle conflict if it arises.

Starting a group can be super rewarding if you put real energy into it.

# Tips For New Groups



Not everything about organizing comes naturally. It is a skill. As with all skills, some parts will come easier than others. Here are some general tips that folks might forget to consider.

- Consistency is key. Keep showing up even if only one other person shows up as well. Things will grow with time and as your reputation does.
- “Hanging Out” with group members in smaller, or more joyous, circumstances can help strengthen the group.
- When your group is first established set up a system of mutual aid/care for one another. This is foundational to having a healthy movement/meeting your goals.
- Build Dopamine into your Organizing. Set small achievable goals as well as big ones and celebrate together.
- Decide TOGETHER how to move forward and how you will handle conflict. Plan with intention. But....
- Be Flexible. As you learn together, get to know one another, have more experience with your city, and get new members your plans may need to change. That is okay as long as everyone involved gets to be a part of those decisions.
- Train and Educate together while you work towards your goals. It is good team building and ensures that you do as little as harm as possible.
- Be sure to discuss if your group will be closed (no new members) or open, and if open when will you consider it closed (if ever).
- Consider making your meetups a potluck type situation. Food encourages folks to come. ←
- Consider making the place accessible to kids (of all ages) for when parents can't find childcare.
- Ask for help when needed. Talk to trusted Elders or veteran organizers if you get stuck in some way.

# Train and Educate

When we engage in activism and action towards change it is absolutely critical that we realize we *\*always\** have room to grow. The groups and activists I have seen last the longest are the ones who engage in continuous learning projects. In doing this we amplify the results of our work and reduce the amount of unintentional harm we might do along the way.

**Note:** We can even extend our education and training to beyond ourselves and the groups we organize with. This is commonly referred to as organizing a “Free School”. Today, all the best movements have them.

## Ideas for Training/Education:

- Data Security
- Privilege and Power
- Conflict Resolution!!
- First Aid, Herbal and Medical
- Protest Safety and Techniques
- Cultural Etiquettes
- Community Security and G\*n Safety
- Recognizing Racist Dog Whistles
- Disruption Techniques
- Decolonization and Abolition in Practice
- Know Your Rights Training
- Cop Watching
- Crisis Response
- Bystander Intervention
- Emergency Preparedness



Internal conflict is the most likely cause of your group breaking up

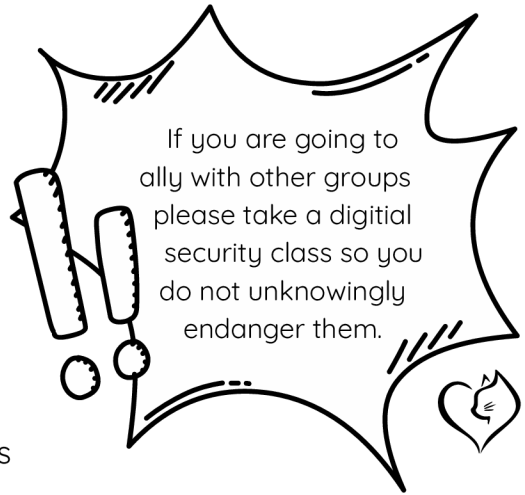


# Ally With Other Organizers & Groups

Once you have established your plan or your group, whatever it's size, and once you have established basic training on cultural etiquette and respect... you can expand your reach in the community by partnering with other existing groups. The best way to do this is to contact the group and ask if you can come volunteer with them for a day. Or set up a meet n greet with food and activities. Bonus points if you set up a point of contact in that group for if allyship is needed during local emergencies.

## Ideas of Groups to Contact:

- Antifa
- University Groups
- Mom Groups
- Local Activists
- Local Herbalists
- DSA and Communist Groups
- Artists and Musicians
- Diversity Committees
- Cultural Groups
- Non-Hateful Religious Groups
- Barter and Exchange Groups
- Local Educators
- Local Medics, Midwives, and Crisis Responders
- Tribal Groups
- Local Farmers. Gardeners and Gleaners
- Tenants and Worker's Unions



**Note:** One way to find active groups in your community is to check local event calendars. They often post their meeting times and special events publicly. Facebook, however problematic, is also a fantastic way to find active local groups both through the “groups” function and the “events” function.

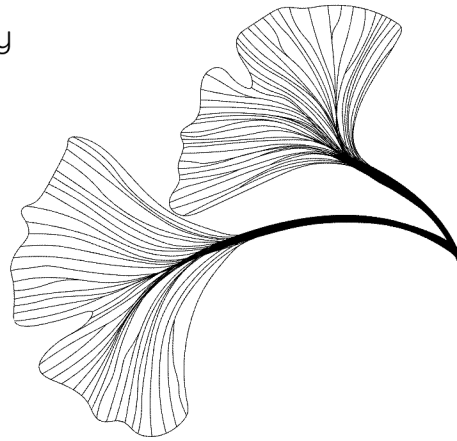
# Incorporate Joy

---

Burnout is real when you hold yourself accountable to helping create positive change in this world. There is a lot of work that needs done. For this reason is critical that we incorporate joy into our lives, and into our organizing, so that we can maintain balance long-term. Plus, it really helps us to connect to the people we are organizing with. Below are some ideas to bring joy into your organizations and personal lives. You might also consider how to do similar at your meetings. One idea is to have a break at half-time and during the break have everyone say something positive to someone else. Or maybe you meet over food or close every meeting with dance.

## Things you can do yourself, or as a group, to bring joy:

- Host a Monthly Potluck
- Host a Dance Party or Block Party
- Read a Good Book
- Go Skating
- Visit an Arcade
- Attend Cultural Events
- Have a Spa or Massage Night
- Do a Care Exchange
- Play Intermural Sports
- Visit a Farm or Animal Sanctuary
- Have a Game Night
- Host a BBQ at Your Favorite Nature Spot
- Set an Alarm to Go Off Once a Day and Dance when it does
- Create Art out of Recycled or Natural Materials
- Host a Community Based Awards Ceremony
- Enter a Float at PRIDE
- Go Caroling, it's not just for Christmas!
- Spend a day with Elders or Children



# Engage in Autonomous Action



Not all actions are meant to be done in our larger group. Some members might object to risky actions, others we might not know well enough to trust. Autonomous actions are things you engage in alone or with a small group of trusted comrades. Autonomous action is also something we do without approval. That is key to keeping yourself safe and it promotes a sense of freedom in Activism. The idea behind autonomous actions is that we don't have to like or agree with what everyone else is doing within our field of activism but we do have to respect folks right to do things differently than us, and our right to do things differently than others.

## **Imagined Ideas for Autonomous Actions:**

(I cannot recommend people perform these actions, not all of them are legal, this list is simply to inspire your imagination)

- zines, wheatpasting, banner dropping and stickering
- pouring concrete in places inconvenient to those in power, or local N\*zi groups
- creating anonymous public disruptions
- throwing a figurative wrench in the social events and party planning of local NIMBYs and MAGAs
- setting off stink poppers at the dinners of local politicians who create hate legislation
- surveillance of local fascists, the places they go, the people they meet
- disabling facilities and equipment that harm employees or produce toxins
- putting in guerilla infrastructure that aids folks in poverty and the Disabled people in your community

# Decolonize Your Lifestyle

---

If we treat Activism and Social Justice as events then we miss out on sustained change. Our lifestyles, the very ways we live, must reflect our values. In this way we sustain change because then social justice isn't just a reactionary protest or new law but its integrated into the way we move through our lives.

Decolonization is a reflection of this. It asks us to evaluate how much of the way we live is due to colonial values and if that really represents our best interests. After all, we could be living in cooperative societies that value the environment and care for their citizens.

- This is where your boycott and divestment practices come in, be intentional with where you buy products that you use on a regular basis. Do you know where your soap comes from? Your groceries? Your clothes? Are they ethically sourced?
- Incorporate the daily practice of connecting with nature in a way that is meaningful to you.
- Incorporate community care into your regular routine. Reflect on how you are caring for vulnerable populations in your community. Consider also the last time you were in good company with elders and children.
- Ask, in all situations, who is the authority here, why and would there be a way to reduce hierarchy in this situation?
- Incorporate culture into your regular routine.
- Be in space with Indigenous people on a regular basis.
- Commit to producing less trash. Reduce, reuse, compost.
- Consider what goes into your body, are you consuming any of your ancestral foods?
- Divest from banks that fund climate change.
- Take a hard look at your long held values and ask yourself where you learned them and if they need adjusting.



# Decolonize Your Group Dynamics



Often when we organize a group we do it in a way that is familiar to us. But because so many of us were indoctrinated into colonization that also means that we are probably holding onto harmful practices out of that same familiarity. Consider asking your group these questions to see if there are areas where you might want to implement change that better puts your values into practice.

- Does your group have enough diversity?
- Is culture present in your group? if so, how is it enacted?
- Is leadership in your group lateral or hierarchal?
- Are the responsibilities of your group being fairly shared?
- Does the location your group uses meet diverse needs?
- Is there someone in your group who has to compromise more than everyone else? is this justified?
- Does your group provide adequate space for family members of attendees, such as children, to attend or be cared for during meetings and actions?
- Do members of your group have their basic survival needs met?
- Does group decision making make room for the minority voice?
- Are members of the group internally policing one another?
- Are members in your group allowed to make mistakes?
- Are people who leave your group treated with respect and made sure they are well?
- Is your group balanced between service work and other types of goals?
- Is all the information you resource from books?
- Is your group building a regular relationship with the community it is serving?

# Get Political

---

Organizing work has several branches but perhaps the two primary ones are: organizing via helping your community directly (service work, volunteerism, mutual aid) and organizing to create systemic change through politics. We can look at this as addressing immediate needs and addressing long-term needs. Both are essential. The following is a list of ideas on how one might tackle the politics of systemic oppression through organizing work (within our current paradigm).

- Address City Council both personally and formally on a regular basis. Disrupt if necessary.
- Address and Disrupt local NIMBY organizers.
- Create, or use, a program that will contact your elected officials for you once a day.
- Disrupt the personal lives of elected officials who act as bigots.
- Make friends with local Journalists and Radio Personalities.
- Host a sit-in at a local government office.
- Try to host a General Strike.
- Disrupt the Lobby Groups and Corporations that buy politicians and swing votes by any means necessary.
- During elections make campaign signs that reflect reality. Use art to educate.
- Educate locals on the different political parties and the many alternatives to them.
- Introduce bills and legislation to help vulnerable people.
- Make a list of other powerful political organizations in your town such as the school board, chamber of commerce and etc. Work with, or disrupt them, to get your goals met.

**Note:** I didn't include anything about encouraging folks to vote in corrupt systems on purpose. Note also that this is when having a coalition helps, politics responds better to "official" titles. See Moms4Liberty as a prime (yet aggravating) example.

# Get Radically Political

---

Beyond working within the current paradigm, outside of the oppressive structures of our current government, we can begin to build what we want the future to look like. Part of doing that is our service work, but another part of doing that is the politics of organizing a social structure outside the current paradigm. And that process has to start somewhere.

Some ways we can help this happen:

- Organize local community based elections (seperate from state/federal government) to make community based decisions.
- Attend a local tribal government meeting (if open to the public) and afterward ask how to be of support.
- Pay taxes to tribal governments so they can gain power.
- Form a group and together play games to practice building consensus. After that learn how consensus building still prevents the minority voice from being heard and practice more equitable options (consensus with veto). Also, try practicing cultural decision making models. Then compare. We can't implement what we don't have the skills for.
- Host mock governments that highlight difference between socialism, capitalist democracy, communism and etc.
- Host events that get the community thinking about what they actually want from local governements or community building. Help people imagine living in a better world.
- Support building working class power and moving the means of production into the hands of the working class.

**Note:** We are brilliant and are only limited by what our imagination can produce so long as we follow through with it.

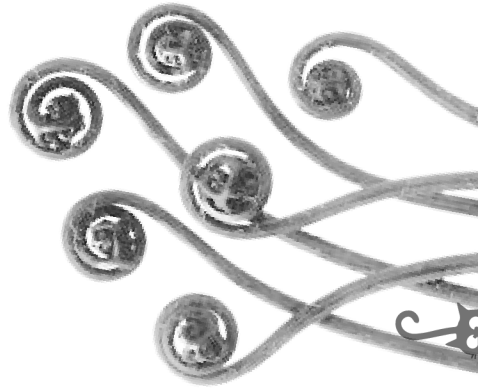


# Seek Connection

---

To help you out I've provided a list of places you can typically go to in order to be around other Activists, Leftists, and People of Culture.

- Campus
- Co-op and Organic Grocery Stores
- Cultural Grocery Stores
- Cafes with Vegan options
- Anarchist Book Stores
- Mutual Aid Groups
- Local Unions
- Service Organizations
- Local Tribes
- Cultural Events and Pride Events
- Dive Bars and Queer Bars
- Community Centers
- Farmer's/Saturday Market
- Attachment Parenting Groups
- Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous
- Blood Drives
- Community Gardens
- Dive Music Venues and Art Galleries
- Protests



**Note:** Wearing patches, or visible signals of your Leftist politics, can help you meet people and find the right crowd. Know, however, that this also makes you a more visible target for bigots. Though there are hidden dress codes for people who want to signal visibility without being too obvious a target, you can find them online.

# Helpful Resources

- The Anarchist Library
- Canva
- Unpacking Invisible Knapsack
- Signal
- Proton Mail
- St. Paul Principles
- beautifultrouble.org
- commons library worksheets
- community tool box toolkits
- blueprintsforchange toolbox
- mobilisationlab resources
- archive.org

Don't forget that you have a hefty resource available to you via local and online activist communities.

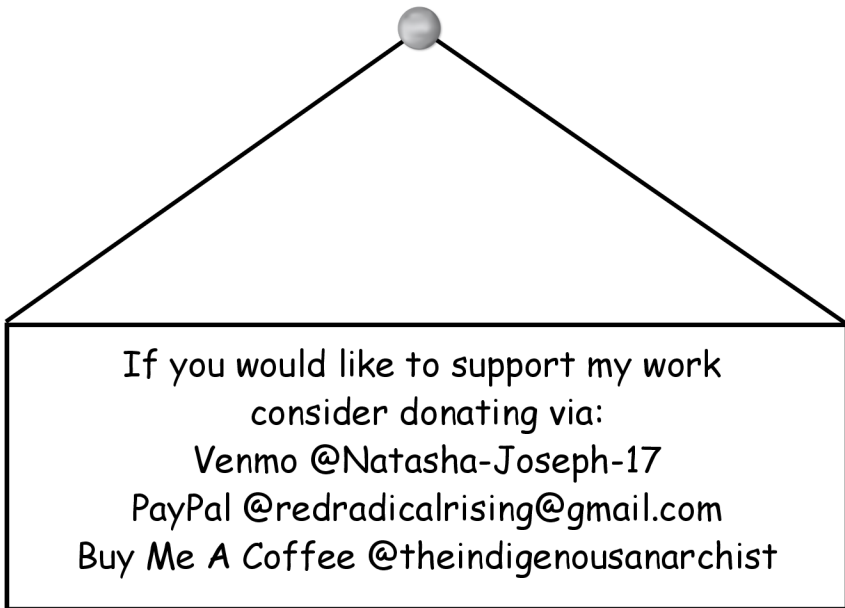
People who have advice from lived experience that are often so willing to offer it especially in exchange for a meal, some nice produce, a piece of art.

## Survival Kit

As much as we want to help others the truth is, for most of us, our own survival takes up the most space in our heads. So, to best be able to help others, create a little mental buffer for yourself. Put some energy into a survival kit. With that in place you will have more mental energy to assist others.

- A couple weeks of shelf-stable protein bars and water
- First-aid kit
- Emergency survival supplies like water purifier, heat blankets, flashlights, map, compass, radio, batteries and etc.
- Copies of important documents
- Emergency cash if available
- Small carryable mementos/photos/cultural and religious items
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of loved ones
- Burner phone and charger
- Baseball bat or other self defense item(s)
- Favorite book, paper and writing instruments





If you would like to support my work  
consider donating via:

Venmo @Natasha-Joseph-17

PayPal @redradicalrising@gmail.com

Buy Me A Coffee @theindigenousanarchist



I hid a cat on every page. Can you find them all?