

# **Fierce Vulnerability Network**

## **Direct Action Manual**

This manual is meant to be used as an accompaniment to the YTCN DNA Handbook, and offers additional resources that you can use to support your team to develop an authentic approach to strategy, tactics, storytelling, culture-building, safety, solidarity, activist support, action art, integrating what you learn, and more.

Some sample resources are linked, and others are included in full or in compressed form. These examples are limited and are offered as models and sparks for your curiosity and creativity.

## CONTENTS

<b>HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SECTION I: PREPARE</b>	<b>6</b>
Points of Intervention	6
Strategic Thinking and Campaigns	7
Spectrum of Allies	9
198 METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION	10
Action Agreements	14
Strategic Questioning	15
Campaign Basics	15
Campaign Timeline	16
The Tactic Star	16
<b>SECTION II: ACT</b>	<b>17</b>
Tools for grounding in direct actions spaces:	17
Courts, custody, jail support	17
The courts	18
Custody and incarceration	19
Jail Support	21
<b>SECTION III: INTEGRATE</b>	<b>27</b>
Debrief the action!	27

# HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The resources in this manual are organized into three sections: **Prepare**, **Act** and **Integrate**. Below is a “cheat sheet” with a general flow of steps. Additional resources on each section will follow below that.

**For items marked with “★ , ”** you will find specific resources or examples in the *Direct Action* section of the *Appendix of the YTN DNA Handbook*.

## I) Prepare

- How are we lifting up the **vocation** of our team members, honoring the nature of **emergence**, and practicing **fierce vulnerability** when we take action?
  - What are our action agreements and field setting intentions? Do they reflect our shared values? How do we plan to bring these agreements and intentions to life? ★
  - **Have we prepared ourselves mentally, emotionally and physically for this action**, and - if applicable - for the possibility of arrest? ★
    - *Ceremony* - Are there elements of ceremony and ritual that will deepen the work for us in this moment?
    - *Vulnerability* - Have we created brave spaces to practice staying open to vulnerability while fiercely resolute?
    - *Connection* - Are we honoring our relationships, building deep cultures of consent, and navigating our emotions in ways that allow us to do risky work together?
- **Identify strategic rationale:**
  - Identify and categorize the **point of intervention** (e.g., blocking machinery doing mountaintop removal coal mining/point of destruction) (see *Points of Intervention* on page X above)
  - **Asking strategic questions:** What is our overall goal? In what ways will this action, done at this time, move us toward achieving that goal? What kinds of power are we hoping to build through this action? How will we measure our impact? To whom are we accountable and what relationships may be impacted by this action? ★
- **Do we have what we need to pull off this action?**
  - **People:** Do we have the numbers and the skills that we need?
  - **Roles:** What roles do we need to fill?
    - *Who will fill each role, and how will they communicate with one another?*

- *Do our role assignments take into account our commitments both to honor vocation in ourselves and one another and to dismantle white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, and other oppressions?*
- **Logistics:** Do we have the materials we need (gear, props/visuals, transportation, food, first aid, shelter, etc.)
- **Audience and Messaging:** What message are we trying to convey, how, and to whom? Does our action design reinforce our messaging? ★
- **Support:** What's our support plan in the event people are arrested? ★
- **Tech and direct action:** The use of technology in an action or other movement space can disrupt the quality of "the field" we create together:
  - Which team members, if any, will be plugged in to cell phones, smartphones, laptops and the like for virtual communication, video, or other purposes?
  - The network holds as a recommended guideline that no more than one person per team will be plugged in during actions, and that members not using tech do not bring their devices to the action. If tech is to be used, decide on which role(s) will be using tech (just one person doing social media and video, for example). If multiple teams are taking action together they are encouraged to share their plans regarding tech with one another, and whenever possible to reduce tech use by delegating the tech work to one member on behalf of multiple teams.
  - *It may be necessary to record some parts of high-risk actions for documentation purposes and to keep one another safer: for example using technology to record abusive actions of police officers.*

## II) Act

- Stay connected to that which called you to this action and act from your heart.
  - **Fierce Vulnerability takes practice**
  - While engaged in the action, if someone from our group steps outside the action agreements, remember that it's our job to invite them back into their own intentions.
- **Do your role! Support others to do theirs.**
  - Be aware of the conditioning of heroism and individualism that can inadvertently create dynamics of "command and control" that replicate patterns of harm.
  - Some roles entail extended periods of intense mental, emotional, or physical engagement. During an action, check in with teammates whose roles require such focus.
  - Sometimes it is just as important to know when to let a role go as it is to know when to step into one.

- **Create a field of truth-telling: The direct action we do together can unmask violence that is present, while simultaneously building the world we long for.**
  - Such actions can generate a type of field that reveals **the tension between the world-as-it-is and the world-as-it-should-be**. Make space to acknowledge the **vulnerable truths** about how we may be complicit in present harms, while also embracing the **fierce truths** about our commitments to personal, communal, and systemic transformation.
  - Our most powerful direct actions can offer a doorway to transformation even when our more concrete goals do not seem within reach.
- Remember that this action isn't over until everyone is free to go (do your jail support and court support as needed)! ★

### III) Integrate

- Debrief the action ★
  - We learn more by processing insights and actions together than we can learn through personal reflection on our individual experience.
  - There is more than one kind of debrief. All of them are important, but time is finite. Sense and respond together about which type(s) to prioritize, and find the time you need.
    - Strategic – Do you want to assess your effectiveness and progress toward any goals that you set?
    - Tactical/Logistical – Do you want to gather lessons learned about roles, communication flow, decision-making, resources, and other nuts and bolts action specifics?
    - Relational – Does your team need to process tension, mistakes, or harm before you can process anything else? Make sure each teammate is consulted about this question before prioritizing other forms of debrief.
- Follow-up and Follow through
  - Relational follow-up: Did you meet new people who you want to stay in touch with? Are there individuals or groups whose feedback you should seek as part of your debrief? Did you begin a conversation with allies or others that you wish to continue?

# SECTION I: PREPARE

*"Strategy awakens the suppressed possibilities of change embedded in each person, in each institution, and in each society" -Fran Peavy*

*"[strategy] is how we turn what we have into what we need to get what we want. It is how we transform our resources into the power to achieve our purposes. It is the conceptual link we make between the targeting, timing, and tactics with which we mobilise and deploy resources and the outcomes we hope to achieve" -Marshall Ganz, 'Why David Sometimes Wins'*

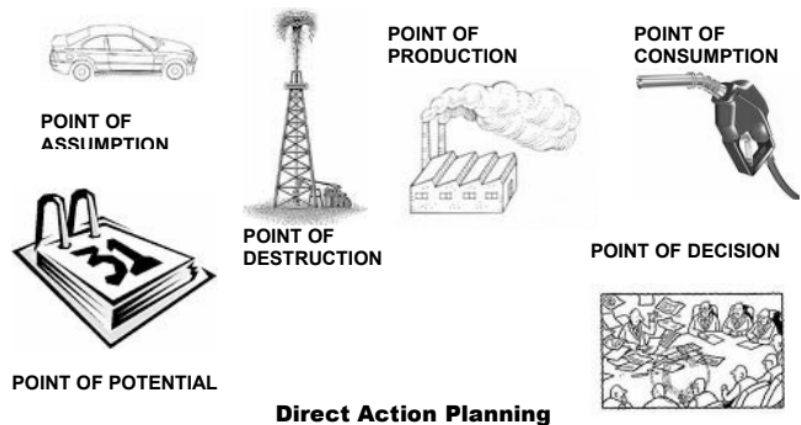
*"If you don't have a strategy, you're part of someone else's strategy." -Alvin Toffler*

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## Points of Intervention

Local governments, state violence, and the corporate capture of policy have consistently created and upheld systemic violence toward brown and Black communities. Our racial healing and climate justice commitments are best served when we choose points of intervention accordingly. Teams are encouraged to ask themselves: What points of intervention will support our most impacted communities to build the power and capacity needed to overcome oppression.

Examples with oil (Read more from Beautiful Trouble website: <https://bit.ly/3qGD3Uo>).



- An initial Action Opportunity: Our dependence on oil starts with the belief that we need oil to provide energy, that we need oil to fuel our cars - or deeper still, that we need to drive cars - and that alternative energy sources are not effective or don't exist. We call this the **Point of Assumption**. It is the point where social norms are developed and upheld.

- The next Action Opportunity comes at the point where oil is drilled. This is the **Point of Destruction** - when resources are extracted and pollution is released.
- Then the oil is piped to refineries, where it is prepared for use in products and for sale on the market. This is the **Point of Production** - when harmful items are created.
- Next, the oil is sold in the form of plastics, engine oil, gasoline, etc. There are plenty of opportunities for actions at the **Point of Consumption**, where products reach the consumer.
- Then there's the **Point of Disposal**. For example, many of the communities across broad swathes of the US are forced into becoming points of disposal for the pipeline industry. A massive amount of environmental and social degradation occurs due to waste generated not just by the pipelines themselves but the disposal of the materials used to extract it.
- At big gatherings like oil company shareholder meetings or Free Trade summits, government and corporate representatives make decisions to expand oil extraction, or reduce trade barriers to make it easier for oil companies to establish a presence in other markets. This is the **Point of Decision** - where plans for the future are determined.
- The final Action Opportunity is at the **Point of Potential**. These are times when for cultural or historical reasons, particular moments become action opportunities. With oil, some Points of Potential include Earth Day, the anniversary of the War in Iraq, Veterans Day, or Independence Day.

## Strategic Thinking and Campaigns

### Principles of Emergent Strategy

from *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* by adrienne maree brown

"In the study and practice of emergent strategy, there are core principles that have emerged and that guide me in learning and using this idea and method in the world. I gather them here with the expectation that they will grow.

- Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)
- Change is constant. (Be like water.)
- There is always enough time for the right work

- There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.
- Never a failure, always a lesson.
- Trust the People. (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy.)
- Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass – build the resilience by building the relationships.
- Less prep, more presence.
- What you pay attention to grows."

As you find your personal and collective orientation to strategy, it may be useful to keep these categories and questions in mind:

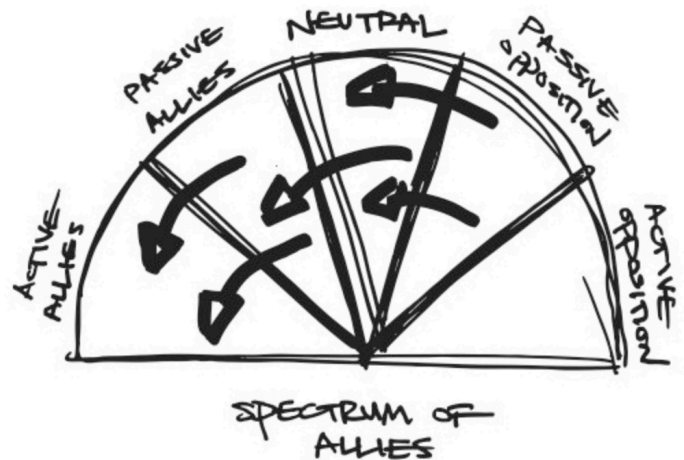
- ❑ **Outreach:** How can you use our efforts to build relationships with impacted communities? Are those communities in leadership, involved in the planning, or offering feedback in the process?
- ❑ **Audience:** Who is the audience you are trying to impact, and how can you best reach them? What is your clear, six second message? What compelling image(s) will accompany your action and reach your audience?
- ❑ **Context:** How does your context (and what's going on in the broader community) impact your decisions about timing actions or other tactics?
- ❑ **Media/Public Message:** What makes it newsworthy? What one image would you like to see disseminated widely? What symbols can you use to simplify and stream-line your message to the audience?
- ❑ **Ceremony:** How will you ground yourselves and set a field for collective action? How can you communicate in ways that reach people emotionally and viscerally, rather than being intellectual and argumentative? What values will you embody?
- ❑ **Symbols:** Can you re-make, re-interpret, or otherwise re-purpose symbols used by the domination system? Can you introduce new symbols in their place?
- ❑ **Goals:** What are your concrete, measurable goals for this action, and how do they align with your overall goals? If you have demands, do they match your action design and your audience?
- ❑ **Location:** What point of intervention are you choosing? How will you determine the right locations for action?
- ❑ **Resources:** What resources do you have in terms of people, time, money, equipment, skills, etc.? What resources and information are still missing? Can you access or develop those resources and information, or will you adjust to bridge that gap?
- ❑ **Decision-making:** How will you make decisions, including in situations when there is no time to engage your normal process?
- ❑ **Creativity:** What could we try that has never been tried before? What could we do differently? How could we involve artists or musicians in this action?



- ❑ **Tactic:** Based on your strategic analysis, what tactics will your group consider? What sort of tactic matches your goals and context? What roles are needed in the planning, action, and follow-up? How will you match people to these roles with an eye to the network's commitments around vocation?

## Spectrum of Allies

In most social change campaigns it's not necessary to win the active opponents over to your point of view, even if the opponent is the target. It's only necessary to move each of the pie wedges one step in your direction. If you can make your passive allies become active, and the neutrals become your passive allies, and the passive opponents act neutrally – you can achieve your aims.



Here is an example from a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee organizer, Bernard Lafayette, who describes identifying allies in their efforts to register voters in Selma, Alabama, in 1965:

*We tried to get people around the city to come, but it was slow. So we went out in the rural [areas]. The people out there are close to the earth, they're very religious and warm and friendly. And mostly they're unafraid. They own most of their own property and their little stores. So we got these people to go and try to register to vote.*

*Then we used this as a leverage to try to embarrass many of the people in the city. City folks are sometimes critical and skeptical about country people. So we pointed out that these people were really getting ahead. When these city people began to go down it was really sort of a birth of a movement.<sup>1</sup>*

In this case, going after a group that was easier to reach (rural folks) made it more possible to mobilize a harder group (city folks). At other times, one might

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from a resource by Joshua Kahn Russell and Daniel Hunter ([www.trainingforchange.org](http://www.trainingforchange.org)). SNCC story from Guy and Candie Carawan, ed., *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through its Songs*.

choose to reach out to harder-to-mobilize groups first.

For more on spectrum of allies, including detailed instructions for how to use it, see:  
<https://beautifulrising.org/tool/spectrum-of-allies>

## 198 METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION

Available at [aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action](http://aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action)

*Practitioners of nonviolent struggle have an entire arsenal of “nonviolent weapons” at their disposal. Listed below are 198 of them. A description and historical examples of each can be found in Gene Sharp's, The Methods of Nonviolent Action (part two of the three-book series The Politics of Nonviolent Action). You can read it for free at <https://cutt.ly/198methodsexplained>*

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| <p><b>THE METHODS OF NONVIOLENT PROTEST AND PERSUASION</b></p> <p><b>Formal Statements</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Public Speeches</li><li>2. Letters of opposition or support</li><li>3. Declarations by organizations and institutions</li><li>4. Signed public statements</li><li>5. Declarations of indictment and intention</li><li>6. Group or mass petitions</li></ol> <p><b>Communications with a Wider Audience</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols</li><li>8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications</li><li>9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books</li><li>10. Newspapers and journals</li><li>11. Records, radio, and television</li><li>12. Skywriting and earthwriting</li></ol> <p><b>Group Representations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>13. Deputations</li><li>14. Mock awards</li><li>15. Group lobbying</li><li>16. Picketing</li><li>17. Mock elections</li></ol> | <p><b>Symbolic Public Acts</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>18. Displays of flags and symbolic colors</li><li>19. Wearing of symbols</li><li>20. Prayer and worship</li><li>21. Delivering symbolic objects</li><li>22. Protest disrobings</li><li>23. Destruction of own property</li><li>24. Symbolic lights</li><li>25. Displays of portraits</li><li>26. Paint as protest</li><li>27. New signs and names</li><li>28. Symbolic sounds</li><li>29. Symbolic reclamations</li><li>30. Rude gestures</li></ol> <p><b>Pressures on Individuals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>31. “Haunting” officials</li><li>32. Taunting officials</li><li>33. Fraternization</li><li>34. Vigils</li></ol> <p><b>Drama and Music</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>35. Humorous skits and pranks</li><li>36. Performances of plays and music</li><li>37. Singing</li></ol> |
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**Processions**

- 38. Marches
- 39. Parades
- 40. Religious processions
- 41. Pilgrimages
- 42. Motorcades

**Honoring the Dead**

- 43. Political mourning
- 44. Mock funerals
- 45. Demonstrative funerals
- 46. Homage at burial places

**Public Assemblies**

- 47. Assemblies of protest or support
- 48. Protest meetings
- 49. Camouflaged meetings of protest
- 50. Teach-ins

**Withdrawal and Renunciation**

- 51. Walk-outs
- 52. Silence
- 53. Renouncing honors
- 54. Turning one's back

**THE METHODS OF SOCIAL  
NONCOOPERATION****Ostracism of Persons**

- 55. Social boycott
- 56. Selective social boycott
- 57. Lysistratic nonaction
- 58. Excommunication
- 59. Interdict

**Noncooperation with Social Events, Customs,  
and Institutions**

- 60. Suspension of social and sports activities
- 61. Boycott of social affairs
- 62. Student strike
- 63. Social disobedience
- 64. Withdrawal from social institutions

**Withdrawal from the Social System**

- 65. Stay-at-home
- 66. Total personal noncooperation
- 67. "Flight" of workers
- 68. Sanctuary
- 69. Collective disappearance
- 70. Protest emigration (hijrat)

**THE METHODS OF ECONOMIC  
NONCOOPERATION: ECONOMIC  
BOYCOTTS****Actions by Consumers**

- 71. Consumers' boycott
- 72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
- 73. Policy of austerity
- 74. Rent withholding
- 75. Refusal to rent
- 76. National consumers' boycott
- 77. International consumers' boycott

**Action by Workers and Producers**

- 78. Workmen's boycott
- 79. Producers' boycott

**Action by Middlemen**

- 80. Suppliers' and handlers' boycott

**Action by Owners and Management**

- 81. Traders' boycott
- 82. Refusal to let or sell property
- 83. Lockout
- 84. Refusal of industrial assistance
- 85. Merchants' "general strike"

**Action by Holders of Financial Resources**

- 86. Withdrawal of bank deposits
- 87. Refusal to pay fees, dues, and assessments
- 88. Refusal to pay debts or interest
- 89. Severance of funds and credit
- 90. Revenue refusal
- 91. Refusal of a government's money

**Action by Governments**

- 92. Domestic embargo
- 93. Blacklisting of traders
- 94. International sellers' embargo
- 95. International buyers' embargo
- 96. International trade embargo

**THE METHODS OF ECONOMIC  
NONCOOPERATION: THE STRIKE****Symbolic Strikes**

- 97. Protest strike
- 98. Quickie walkout (lightning strike)  
Agricultural Strikes
- 99. Peasant strike
- 100. Farm Workers' strike Strikes by Special  
Groups
- 101. Refusal of impressed labor
- 102. Prisoners' strike
- 103. Craft strike
- 104. Professional strike

**Ordinary Industrial Strikes**

- 105. Establishment strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 107. Sympathetic strike

**Restricted Strikes**

- 108. Detailed strike
- 109. Bumper strike
- 110. Slowdown strike
- 111. Working-to-rule strike
- 112. Reporting "sick" (sick-in)
- 113. Strike by resignation
- 114. Limited strike
- 115. Selective strike

**Multi-Industry Strikes**

- 116. Generalized strike
- 117. General strike

**Combination of Strikes and Economic  
Closures**

- 118. Hartal

- 119. Economic shutdown

**THE METHODS OF POLITICAL  
NONCOOPERATION****Rejection of Authority**

- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 122. Literature and speeches advocating  
resistance

**Citizens' Noncooperation with  
Government**

- 123. Boycott of legislative bodies
- 124. Boycott of elections
- 125. Boycott of government employment and  
positions
- 126. Boycott of government depts., agencies,  
and other bodies
- 127. Withdrawal from government  
educational institutions
- 128. Boycott of government-supported  
organizations
- 129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement  
agents
- 130. Removal of own signs and placemarks
- 131. Refusal to accept appointed officials
- 132. Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

**Citizens' Alternatives to Obedience**

- 133. Reluctant and slow compliance
- 134. Nonobedience in absence of direct  
supervision
- 135. Popular nonobedience
- 136. Disguised disobedience
- 137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to  
disperse
- 138. Sitdown
- 139. Noncooperation with conscription and  
deportation
- 140. Hiding, escape, and false identities
- 141. Civil disobedience of "illegitimate" laws

**Action by Government Personnel**

- 142. Selective refusal of assistance by government aides
- 143. Blocking of lines of command and information
- 144. Stalling and obstruction
- 145. General administrative noncooperation
- 146. Judicial noncooperation
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents
- 148. Mutiny

**Domestic Governmental Action**

- 149. Quasi-legal evasions and delays
- 150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units

**International Governmental Action**

- 151. Changes in diplomatic and other representations
- 152. Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
- 153. Withholding of diplomatic recognition
- 154. Severance of diplomatic relations
- 155. Withdrawal from international organizations
- 156. Refusal of membership in international bodies
- 157. Expulsion from international organizations

**THE METHODS OF NONVIOLENT INTERVENTION****Psychological Intervention**

- 158. Self-exposure to the elements
- 159. The fast
  - a) Fast of moral pressure
  - b) Hunger strike
  - c) Satyagrahic fast
- 160. Reverse trial
- 161. Nonviolent harassment

**Physical Intervention**

- 162. Sit-in
- 163. Stand-in
- 164. Ride-in
- 165. Wade-in
- 166. Mill-in
- 167. Pray-in
- 168. Nonviolent raids
- 169. Nonviolent air raids
- 170. Nonviolent invasion
- 171. Nonviolent interjection
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

**Social Intervention**

- 174. Establishing new social patterns
- 175. Overloading of facilities
- 176. Stall-in
- 177. Speak-in
- 178. Guerrilla theater
- 179. Alternative social
- 180. Alternative communication system

**Economic Intervention**

- 181. Reverse strike
- 182. Stay-in strike
- 183. Nonviolent land seizure
- 184. Defiance of blockades
- 185. Politically motivated counterfeiting
- 186. Preclusive purchasing
- 187. Seizure of assets
- 188. Dumping
- 189. Selective patronage
- 190. Alternative markets
- 191. Alternative transportation systems
- 192. Alternative economic institutions

**Political Intervention**

- 193. Overloading of administrative systems
- 194. Disclosing identities of secret agents
- 195. Seeking imprisonment
- 196. Civil disobedience of "neutral" laws
- 197. Work-on without collaboration
- 198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

*It must be clearly understood that the greatest effectiveness is possible when individual methods to be used are selected to implement the previously adopted strategy. It is necessary to know what kind of pressures are to be used before one chooses the precise forms of action that will best apply those pressures.*

Michael Beer with Nonviolence International developed an updated list with over 300 tactics, available at <https://tactics.nonviolenceinternational.net/>

## Action Agreements

Action agreements are an important part of preparing for an action. They can remind participants why they are there, create a sense of unity and discipline, and help to ensure our shared commitment to integral nonviolence and Fierce Vulnerability.

Below is a sample action agreement used by the No Coal No Gas (NCNG) Campaign. This version is edited for brevity. The full version - including a version for actions during the COVID-19 pandemic - can be viewed at <https://cuff.ly/NoCoalNoGasAgreements>

*These agreements are a distillation of our community's values. By participating in this action, you consent to follow these agreements, and to be called back into these agreements with love if you step out of them. Mistakes happen, we are all human, and we agree to hold one another accountable to these commitments with love and respect. For each action, participants may be asked to affirm additional agreements relevant to safety or strategy for specific scenarios.*

1. I will stay safe. This includes:
  - a. I will have a buddy and we will stay together.
  - b. I will come prepared for the weather.
  - c. If I plan to risk arrest, I will complete an action support form.
2. I will be aware of the whole group and act as a team. This includes:
  - a. I will watch for those who could be in danger, left behind, or at higher risk than they want to be.
  - b. I will ask for help when I need it.
  - c. I will give help when others ask.
  - d. I will follow decisions made by the process agreed upon by the group.
  - e. I will only do as much as I'm able and called to do; I will not push myself or others beyond our limits.
  - f. I will be mindful of how my actions impact the safety of others, including how I act toward law enforcement.
3. I will follow the action plan. This includes:
  - a. I will not lie to police (it's OK to remain silent).
  - b. I will not initiate touch with the police, their property, or their vehicles.
  - c. I will refer police to the police liaison/de-escalator on the team.
  - d. If I bring a phone, it will be locked with a method OTHER THAN fingerprint or facial recognition.
  - e. I will not wear a mask or in any other way attempt to hide my identity.

4. *I will follow the messaging plan.*
5. *I will remain physically and verbally nonviolent. Examples:*
  - a. *Verbal: I will not communicate in ways that dehumanize or threaten others. This includes in-person and digital communications.*
  - b. *Physical: I will not throw things. I will not touch others without their consent. I will not physically assault or threaten to physically assault anyone.*
6. *I will not be under the influence of or in possession of illegal drugs, marijuana, or alcohol, and I will not carry a weapon.*
  - a. *If I plan to use an item during the action that may be construed as a weapon, I will check in with the police liaison team and tactical leads about how best to handle this object if approached by police or security.*
7. *I will act with respect and equity toward others, being aware of varied identities and experiences within our group and beyond.*
  - a. *I will be aware of the dynamics of gender, race, and class within our group and act to break down systems of oppression where I see them.*
  - b. *I will not use racist or culturally appropriative words or symbols in any communication.*
8. *I will act from my heart & my conviction and stay connected to that which called me here.*

## Strategic Questioning

From Fran Peavey, edited by Vivian Hutchinson

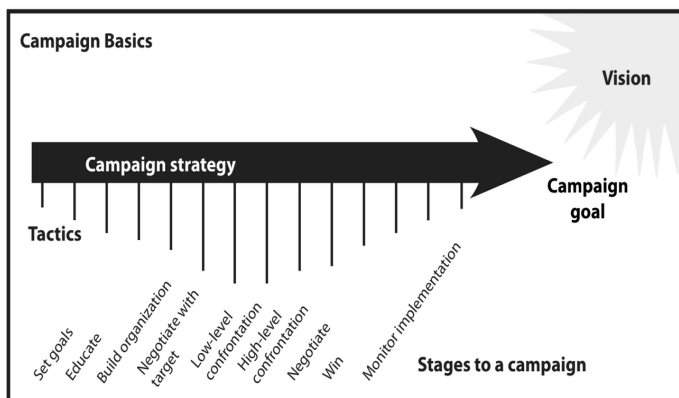
For more, visit <https://bit.ly/3oE1oJv>



### KEY FEATURES

The key features of STRATEGIC QUESTIONING are :

- It creates knowledge by synthesising new information from that which is already known.
- It awakens the suppressed possibilities of change embedded in each person, in each institution and in each society.
- It is empowering - ownership of the new information stays with the person answering the question.
- It releases the blocks to change and new ideas.
- It facilitates people's own responses to change.
- It generates energy to make changes happen.
- It creates answers that may not be immediately known but may emerge over time.



## Campaign Basics

From the Ruckus Society (whose resources and work are now part of BlackOUT Collective). You can find this and more in the Ruckus Action Strategy Guide at <https://bit.ly/3u6TYQ9>

# Campaign Timeline

From Marshall Ganz

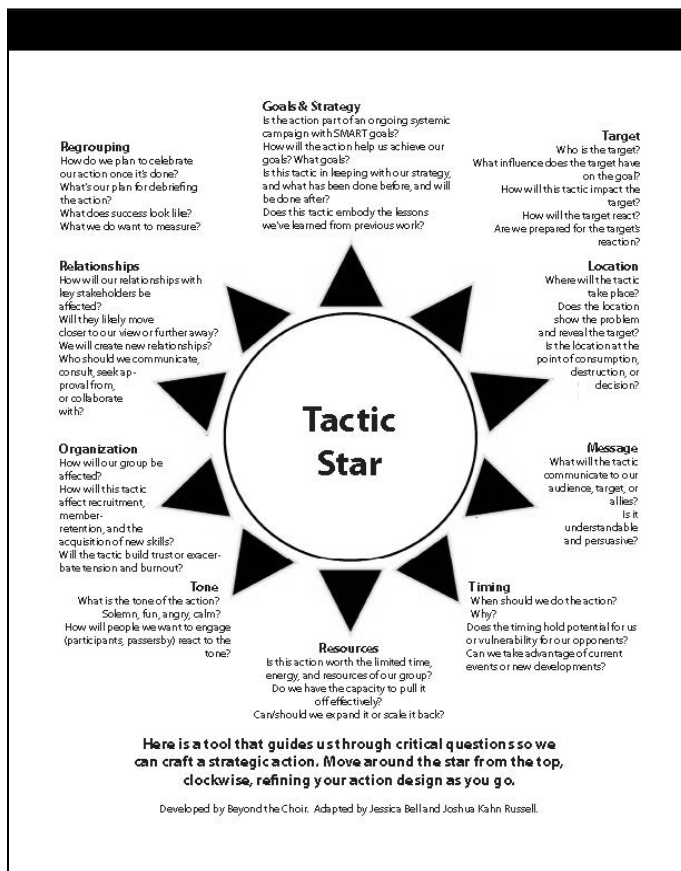
For more visit <https://bit.ly/3wrqgOU>



## The Tactic Star

From the Ruckus Society (whose resources and work are now part of BlackOUT Collective). You can find this and more in the Ruckus Action Strategy Guide at

<https://bit.ly/3u6TYQ9>





## **SECTION II: ACT**

### **Tools for grounding in direct actions spaces:**

- **Buddy Up:** Make sure that everyone has at least one other person they will regularly check in with and look out for when we're in action. Schedule regular times to invite everyone to check in with their buddy.
- **Belly Breathing:** Breathe long, slow, deep breaths, bringing awareness to the rise and fall of your belly, counting the number of seconds on the in breath and out breath, and trying to make the length of the out breath 1 count longer than the in breath.
- **Name Body Sensations:** Name and feel your body sensations, on your own, in a pair, or in a group.
- **Feelings Check-in:** Each person shares from the heart about emotions they are feeling, as well as challenges and celebrations they are experiencing.
- **Grounding Physical Contact:** Mutually consented to physical contact like a hug, hand on a shoulder, holding hands, etc can help people ground.
- **Sing:** Sing a Song or Chant
- **Restate Intentions & Values**
- **Pair Listening Trade:** Take equal time with another person to practice empathic listening, drawing on modalities such as Nonviolent Communication, Re-evaluation Counseling, etc (see Additional Resources section of the YTBN DNA Handbook for more).
- **Self-Empathy:** Use self-empathy to transform shame, process challenging situations, open our heart to others by transforming "enemy images", grieve loss, and/or celebrate what's going well.

### **Courts, custody, jail support**

**Actions do not end at the point of arrest** - they continue until the entirety of the legal process is complete. As explained earlier in this handbook, courts and the criminal justice system exact their punishments by separating and then isolating us from one another. Bureaucratically, we are often powerless within this system, purposely left feeling uncertain and alone. However, it is within our ability to remind one another that **we are powerful together**, that we can face great odds, and we can support one another in taking greater and greater risks in order to bring about the world we want to live in.

## The courts

The criminal justice system extends far beyond the police force - courts also systematically dehumanize people. The courts are a stark arena where social privilege or access to capital determines the range of possible outcomes for individuals. Another way to say this is that racism and classism inform the process as much as or more than the material facts related to the case.

If we are going to opt-in to the criminal justice system, we believe that we need to do that responsibly, acknowledging the relative privilege we have embodied or claimed when we voluntarily put ourselves in a position where we may be charged with a criminal offense. One way to do so responsibly is to take the time and emotional energy to witness how the system treats other people who didn't choose to be there. Most of the other people who will be in the courtroom with you are going to be unhappy to be there. We encourage you to treat these people and their cases with respect. This may look like avoiding conversation with one another while other people's cases are being heard, or keeping our group's demeanor determined, serious, and focused.

We engage in direct action to defend our communities from harm. Because the law is a tool of those in power, many of those actions to defend our communities happen to be illegal. The ethos of civil disobedience invites us to look at all our actions as an opportunity to tell a story that can push us toward the cultural and systemic transformations we need. Some folks engaging in direct action intend to use their time in the courts to level a critique against the status-quo and/or to build organizing power to help them achieve their goals. When we engage the courts in this way, we are using the courtroom as a platform for telling the story of why we have a responsibility to act for the common good when our government, corporations, and others act irresponsibly. This approach asks, "If we initially acted because it was necessary, why would we not speak that truth at every opportunity?"

Alternatively, depending on the circumstances, you and your team may choose to move through the process as quickly as possible with the lowest legal and financial

consequences. This most often looks like taking a plea deal, which could include community service, paying a fine, and/or some kind of probation arrangement.

Different team members may make different choices about how to proceed with their cases. It is important that teams support individuals to make the choice that is right for them at this point in their lives.

No matter which approach you choose it will be important to support one another to cope with the uncertainty that will very likely be part of the process.

*A note on lawyers:* If you qualify for representation by a public defender you should know that their job as they understand it is to minimize consequences for you. They have so many cases that they are unable to get into detailed legal arguments for many of them, particularly when they involve misdemeanor charges. Therefore, they are going to encourage you from the start to take a plea deal. If this isn't the approach that you want you can try representing yourself or finding a pro bono attorney to represent you. No matter what kind of lawyer you have or how much you pay them, **they work for you**. If you determine that they are not working in alignment with your goals, it's important to find someone else who will. See related resources in the appendices.

## **Custody and incarceration<sup>2</sup>**

Because we are committed to direct action, we anticipate that many of us will be taken into police custody, charged with criminal offenses, and that those charges will be adjudicated in courts. Before putting ourselves in these situations, it is important to prepare mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Any team member who is convicted and faces incarceration should be supported to do deeper preparatory work.

As discussed above in relation to the courts, most people we will encounter while in custody or incarcerated are not there willingly or as a result of anything we would associate with true justice. As such, we need to show up with a commitment to practicing solidarity with those navigating or caught up in this broken system, and sensitivity to the very likely and very significant differences between our situation and theirs.

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<sup>2</sup> Custody: When law enforcement has physical custody of you prior to a criminal conviction. This can be either "police custody" before you've seen a judge, or "judicial custody" if a judge determines that you should remain in jail prior to conviction. Incarceration: Serving a sentence, post-conviction for a criminal offense, in a jail, prison, or detention center.

## **How to act in jail/custody with other people who didn't plan to be there (racial and social solidarity):**

Some recommendations from formerly incarcerated allies of the network:

- Refrain from asking other people why they were taken into custody or why they are incarcerated.
- In general don't be inquisitive. If others initiate sharing their story be willing to listen, but listen with empathy rather than with potential solutions. Carry yourself with that type of humility.
- Relatedly, don't push yourself forward, in the food line for example. Again, carry yourself with humility and with respect for those who know the context way better than you do.
- Be mindful of whether or not you're in a mindset of wanting to "save" others. If you are, drop it. Coming into contact with incarcerated individuals and hearing their stories you might feel compelled to offer assistance of some kind. Avoid making promises that you're not 100% sure you can follow through on. Don't offer advice about dealing with guards or other people's legal situation.
- Do not advocate for anyone with the guards or other prison staff. Be mindful of the potential retribution others may face after you have been released. You will witness injustices inside, and you may feel compelled to use whatever privileges or contacts you may have access to, in order to mitigate those injustices, but you are most likely going to leave well before the person on whose behalf you may wish to advocate, and things may get worse for them after you're gone.
- If you choose to sing or practice some other form of emotional regulation together, pay attention to how it may impact others.

Some other considerations when in custody, before you have appeared in court:

- Always ask for your phone call. You are entitled to one, but it may not be offered to you unless you ask. Make sure you're calling the number that your team agreed to call. If there's someone else you want to contact, ask your team contact to reach out to them on your behalf.
- Avoid talking about your action in all spaces, even chatting about it with your teammates. Anything you say (even if you don't see anybody listening) can be used against you or others who have some connection to your action.

Each team needs to know what its solidarity practices are, including within the court/jail setting (ie: Will you support people sharing whatever resources you bring with others they meet in that setting, such as bail funds, snacks, or rides home?). If you have a large group of people in custody, be mindful that this will likely delay the process for others, which can add stress to an already difficult situation.

# Jail Support

## **RESOURCE: Climate Disobedience Center Jail Support Guide**

*(note: no one person can do all of these. Buddies and teams are essential and make the experience more fun, equitable, and do-able.)*

### **A JAIL SUPPORT TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Tracking people when they are arrested so that the jail support team + action coordinators know where those in custody are taken.
- Going to the holding facilities (police stations, jails, other) to advocate for those taken into custody/arrested - with special attention to tracking people who are at greater risk of being harmed or neglected when in custody. This includes (but is not limited to) Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other People of Color; transgender, gender queer, and other people who live outside the heteronormative gender binary, undocumented people, minors, and those in poor health or who require medication.
- Get ready for the release of those in custody by making sure you have snacks and drinks that work for each of them. Being there when they are released - with a party, a warm supportive presence, or a brass band. At least snacks.
- Making sure that when people are released, they (and their action coordinators and/or volunteer lawyers) know what their paperwork says (recommended charges, court date/time/location). If someone is available to also coordinate getting them back to court at the right time, this is a great additional support.
- Spending a moment with them processing the day as they transition back to their familiar spaces and faces. Re-entering everyday life can be a difficult and disorienting transition.
- Working with others to come up with bail (if bail is required for some or all of your group to be released).
- Make sure everyone is released and supported in getting home.

### **A JAIL SUPPORT TEAM MAY ALSO CHOOSE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Holding onto the stuff of those risking arrest (especially keys, backpacks, wallets)
- Communicating details of the arrests/transport/charges/court dates with lawyers supporting the group.

### **Jail Support and Uncertainty (self-preparation)**

Jail support work comes with a lot of uncertainty (because we can't know exactly what will happen or what will be needed from us), and so we may spend large parts of the day confused or unsure about what is happening and what to expect will happen next.

- Uncertainty can make us feel anxious or confused.
- When we are trying to support other people, uncertainty can make us worry that we're "*not doing it right*" or that we don't have what we need to do the task well.
- When we are feeling these kinds of feelings, we might become frantic, which makes it hard for us to process new information and can transmit anxious energy to the people we are here to support.
- **We aim to stay grounded and focused, even in the midst of uncertainty and confusion.**
- **We also aim to transmit a calm, focused energy to the people around us. This is one way we can support others during an action day (by not introducing or magnifying anxiety for others)**
- Watching another person be arrested at an action can be very stressful and can leave support people feeling powerless. In some ways, people who chose to risk arrest have more control in that moment because they chose the risk.
  - The action may have been designed with the idea that jail support people would be present at the action in the role of witnesses. Alternatively, they may have planned for jail support people to be off-site with one person assigned to call them to with instructions for where to find people who were detained.
  - If the decision about whether to be present at the action site is up to you, spend some time before the action you intend to support to discern what is right for you and the rest of the jail support team. If being present at the action would introduce too much anxiety or risk for you, make sure you share that with others and make a clear plan for communication so that you can join the jail support effort after people are in custody.

### **Helpful Questions to Help Prep Jail Support Team Members:**

*(this can be done in buddy pairs or in a team)*

- How do you experience nervousness, confusion, anxiety, or fear? What does it feel like in your body? How do you know what you're feeling? (name the sensations and where they appear in the body).
- When you feel any of these things, what do you need?
- Based on your answers about what you need in those moments, how will you get what you need today if you feel any of those things? How can others support you? Who/how will you ask for support?

### **Materials**

- ❑ Legal Intake Forms. You can find useful options by searching for "jail support form" online, or contact [info@climatedisobedience.org](mailto:info@climatedisobedience.org) to request the Climate Disobedience Center's version.
- ❑ A clipboard (or a binder clip will do) for keeping the legal intake forms together.

→ You'll want to alphabetize them by first name (for faster reference later). When arrests are made, you can remove any that belong to people who didn't get arrested from your active pile of intake forms. Once you know where people are, you may want to divide the forms by location.

- ❑ Masking tape (it's good to have the manilla colored (off-white) tape because it's easy to read when you write on it, it's the least expensive masking tape, and it won't damage fabrics or other surfaces. It's nice to have wider tape so you can write bigger when you make name tags)... use it to make name tags and to label peoples stuff)
- ❑ Sharpies
- ❑ Your computer, if practical (for making a spreadsheet with all of the legal intake info on it)
- ❑ Phone, charger, external battery
- ❑ Cash receipt forms of some sort for tracking \$ (or whatever system you come up with)
- ❑ Notebook/pens

#### **Planning Questions:**

- What's the plan for getting the personal belongings of the people risking arrest?
  - *Make sure you've labeled each person's things with their names so it's easy to return the stuff*
- What's the transportation plan? How are you going to get people who have been released back to where they need to be or get supporters to the facility where people are being released?
- What phone number will you give people who are risking arrest? (What number will they call when they are in custody?)
- How will you track things like bail money (especially when in a possible IOU situation) as well as number and contacts of people arrested and their charges?
  - *We recommend taking photos of the paperwork people are released with (with consent) for to ensure good court/legal support and tracking. A bail money spreadsheet or running tally doesn't hurt either.*

Note: You will probably need to research where your folks are likely to be taken after they are arrested. State Police will bring people to a different location (facility) than local law enforcement. In larger cities and with mass mobilizations, arrestees from the same protest could be taken to multiple facilities. One decision you might have to make is sending some members of your support team to different facilities to assist in tracking down arrestees.

You can also get this information at the action itself by asking your police liaison to request this information from police, though we have found that State Police don't usually know where detainees will be processed.

### **Some "Make Sures":**

- MAKE SURE the support people have your contact and that you have theirs (names, numbers, emails), and when you send people somewhere, make a note for yourself about who is going where.
- MAKE SURE everyone knows where to meet up after the action, and don't leave the site until the police liaison has given you addresses for where people are being taken.
- Make sure the support people are fed or get \$ for food for their own meals during their jail support effort.
- Make sure you either distribute \$ and lists of snacks to each facility (to the people going to each station) or that you buy/bring/source snacks and divide them up before sending people.
- Make sure people at police stations have contact info for drivers coming to their place.
- Make sure you've got your cash tracking in order and that there is extra bail commissioner \$ going to each facility just in case.
- **Special Tip:** If those risking arrest have your phone number to call while they are in custody, ask others who may communicate with you to use text messages, if possible, instead of calling. If they do call you, they need to know that you may abruptly hang up on them if you get another incoming call.

### **Once At the Facility**

When first arriving, a jail support team member should approach the front desk and say that they are here supporting the protesters who were brought in from \_\_\_\_\_. They can also say they have extra bail \$ in case any of the protesters don't have the \$40. (note: this resource was developed for a setting where we have learned to expect that nonviolent protesters are likely to be arrested for a bail commissioner's fee of \$40. Your setting may be different).

Inquire about once an hour about whether there is an update on the timeline for release.

If someone who was arrested needs to take medicine at a certain time, jail support also needs to ask at that time if that person is being allowed to take their medicine. If the officers are unresponsive or say "no", call a lawyer (if you have access to one) and



ask them to advocate for the person to get their meds. *\*\*Police aren't required to allow them to take their medicine, but generally they don't want to create a bigger medical problem. It's best for your folks who need medicine to have it on their person in the original prescription container, as prescribed to them.\*\**

Use this time to check in as a Jail Support Team - both emotionally and logistically. As the numbers of jail supporters grow (as more people arrive from the action), you can put them to work entering data from jail support forms, sorting through personal belongings that might have gotten jumbled in transport, and sourcing down tasty snacks and treats for everyone as they wait for release and others are released.

**\*\*adrenal fatigue is real** and it's probably going to set in once your team reaches their destination(s). For some this could look like tears, for some silence, and for others irritability. These moments of 'hurry up and wait' are a place to deepen our connection to one another, shift our relationships to powerlessness and uncertainty, and also have fun! For having fun, it can be best to step outside and away from the facility, depending on the mood you will be bringing with your "fun". Avoid making it seem like you are treating this moment and this place like a game. **\*\***

### Once Everyone is Released

- **FIRST:** jail cells and prolonged contact with the brutality of the criminal justice system can be deeply dysregulating. Your #1 goal as the jail support team at this moment is to give people space and/or comfort as needed as they are released. Provide snacks, a few moments to breathe, perhaps a hug or a song. **If reporters are on scene they will attempt to interrupt this moment - try not to let them.**
- **IMPORTANT, but definitely SECOND:** Look at all of the discharge papers, and take a photo of at least one person's paperwork (the part of the page with the charges, and court appearance info). Don't assume that all of the charges and court dates are the same. **\*\*Some people prefer to take a photo of every discharge paper - to more accurately keep records throughout the legal process and to prevent anyone from falling through a potential crack.\*\***
- Lastly, you need to be sure the people who were released know when to come to court and have some idea of how to get there. In some cases, court dates will happen on the morning of the next business day, so it's important to get that started. They should tell folks to check their email in the next few days for information about the courthouse, how to enter it, what to do inside, etc.

Someone on your jail support team should be prepared to take on the task of collecting and sending out the post-arrest email or find out who is doing it from the action coordination team.

- Let people know that folks should show up 30 minutes before the time on the paperwork. (Those 30 minutes should be to convene, touch into the place of conviction that brings them into direct action work, and to give more time to realize that someone hasn't made it to court)
- Then go outside with everyone and circle up. Take a few deep breaths together. Ask people to share something they saw today that was beautiful or powerful or faithful. Give everybody a chance to share, including support people. Close with appreciation for everyone.
- If people aren't yet matched to drivers, do that after the circle of people disperses, making sure to try to match people up geographically as much as possible.
- Jail Support people should let you know if anybody needs help getting to court, especially if court is the next morning. As long as a record is being kept, jail support can also give some \$ for transit.
- Ceremony is powerful. Make sure to end this phase of the action with a collective moment for all those gathered.

## SECTION III: INTEGRATE

### Debrief the action!

It is critically important to debrief actions to support processing, healing, vulnerability, and emotional growth. Additionally, direct action is a **craft**. In order to get better at it, debriefs are essential in order to harvest learnings for the next action.

After an action, groups tend to be more comfortable recounting what went well and tend to shy away from processing what participants learned about what didn't work, what was missing, and what ways of acting together could be changed. The more we get the whole group thinking about the strategy questions (*how did things go with our decision-making, our teamwork, our overall strategy, etc*), we strengthen our ability to think as organizers and campaigners.

#### HOW TO DEBRIEF AN ACTION:

It's important to discern whose vocation it is to facilitate a debrief. It is the facilitator's job to hold a type of field that helps participants access vulnerability in order to tell the truth about their experience, ask hard questions, stay open to learning, and celebrate what went well.

Because it's very important for the facilitator of a debrief to be prepared to put the needs of the group first while holding this role, they may need to process 1:1 with a buddy before or after the larger debrief. Even if someone is vocationally matched to this task, they may need to process the experience emotionally before holding such space for others. Help each other out! It is always best to facilitate as a pair so that if one person lands in an emotionally charged place, the other can step in. If there is a large group or a lot of feelings to process, a co-facilitator can track how people are doing and help to keep the team together and tending to what rises. Facilitators may want to utilize the go-arounds used in many network practices to foster equal participation and reflection.

If there were many moving parts in your action, it can take way too much time to begin with a question like "*What happened?*". This question is generally not useful in an action debrief. One exception to this advice: if the debrief surfaces tension or disagreement about a particular choice or moment, it may be useful to intervene with that question so that people can listen to one another's perspective.

If there were specific goals (both transactional and transformational) named before the action, it's good to begin a debrief by naming them - perhaps even writing them out on flipchart paper to refer back to during the meeting.

Name the goals for the debrief. Is this debrief about gathering lessons on tactics and logistics? Is the purpose to process a challenging or frightening event? Are you trying to evaluate your effectiveness as allies? There are many options, and a single debrief cannot process all of the possible learning and feedback. Make sure you agree on the goals of your debrief.

*Try to make sure there are some "pluses" and "deltas" that specifically address the goals.*

## **DEBRIEF FORMAT**

**1) Pluses ("what went well"):** It is important to start the debrief with pluses, aka "what went well." Facilitators should encourage participants to wait until later in the debrief to offer more critical feedback. This helps to build a field of trust and establish an energetic flow for feedback before tackling anything that may be more difficult to process.

As facilitator, pay attention to roles that tend to be behind the scenes. If nobody mentions a plus about those hidden things (or how the group prepared in advance), you can ask questions about those areas.

About 20% of the allotted time is usually good enough for pluses.

Note: Pluses aren't the source of most of our learning (with the exception of things that we did well in a way that surprised us or things we innovated on the fly. Those often come out earlier on in the debrief).

Tip: If people say generic things "we did a good job staying positive" or "we were disorganized", ask people to say more about it. If they can name anything specific about what people did or didn't do to create the situation, that's where we learn.

**2) Deltas (what could we do better? What would we do differently next time? What was missing?):** Help your team keep it constructive and focused on learning (not blaming).

We learn a lot from the insights generated in this part of the debrief, especially because different people will see different parts of the action and process shared experiences differently. We learn the most when we integrate learnings from all available perspectives.

It is recommended that Deltas take up about 40% of your allotted time.

It's ok if people realize pluses and add them as they unearth deltas. Sometimes pluses emerge in this section of the meeting as a defensive reaction to what feels like criticism directed at individuals. Facilitators are responsible for supporting the group to integrate the wisdom that emerges. If there is disagreement about how to interpret parts of an action, it is important to hold space in that moment for conversation about these differing experiences.

**3) Integration (Key Learnings):** At the end, to refocus on forward momentum and broader vision, ask people to make some statements about what we learned. These are best if they are generalized principles for how to do the work going forward taken from the specific points in the debrief.

For example, if there was some kind of mass confusion in the middle of the action because people got separated from one another, a key learning might be *"Going forward, we should have contingency plans and a clearer decision-making structure."*

Or if nobody got good photos or video of the event, a key learning might be *"Next time, let's agree on a 'shot list' of photo/video images we want and make sure that x number of people have that list and are working to get the images we agreed on."*

It could also be that someone spontaneously led the group in a grounding ritual in the middle of the action when anxiety, confusion, and disconnection were rising – and it made all the difference. A key learning from that insight might be that you want to integrate that practice into your action culture going forward.

The translation of situational learning into more generalized "key learnings" may feel unnecessary or redundant. However, it is an important step for checking for group agreement on how to apply the learning to future efforts. This step also concludes the debrief with positive, forward-looking strategies that celebrate your collective learning, growth, and commitment.

Three final reminders:

1. Debriefs are an opportunity to practice lifting up the vocational gifts that team members bring to actions. For example: "Kendra, I noticed that you always know when the group needs to slow down and take a breath during an action."
2. Debriefs make space for the wisdom of emergence. What did you learn that could only be learned by doing?
3. Key learnings could be something that applies not just to your team, but to the entirety of the network. As appropriate, share what you learn with others!

There you have it! Remember, no one person can do all of this so, please use whatever in this guide is helpful and applicable. Reach out any time to Emma or Marla at [info@climatedisobedience.org](mailto:info@climatedisobedience.org) for support.

Stay in trouble!