

Conflict Resolution & Transformative Justice Process InterAccess			
Document Overview (↓ Skip to Process)			
Purpose	The InterAccess Conflict Resolution & Transformative Justice Process aims to pursue constructive and harm-reductive methods of conflict resolution.		
Application	By getting involved with InterAccess, all InterAccess staff, contributors, and participants agree to adhere to these processes when requested by InterAccess and the greater InterAccess community. These guidelines complement InterAccess's Equity Policy, Accessibility Policy, Community Guidelines, Knowledge Stewardship Protocols, and Code of Conduct. Breachers of the Code of Conduct will be asked to engage in the processes outlined in this document. If a breacher does not consent to any of the below processes, InterAccess retains the right to refuse their access to or participation in future InterAccess activities.		
Effective Date	December 2022	Date Last Changed	September 2023
Current Version	2.0	Previous Version	N/A
Feedback Process	This is a living document, open to feedback and change requests. If you have any questions, concerns, or other feedback, please email info@interaccess.org		
Important Note	These guidelines are being piloted as a part of “Rhizomatic Pedagogies” and “Terra Firma,” InterAccess programs supported by the Canada Council for the Arts. As a pilot initiative, this code of conduct has not yet fully been implemented into InterAccess programs, projects, and/or activities beyond “Rhizomatic Pedagogies” and “Terra Firma.”		
For InterAccess	Change Request & Version Control Doc Conflict Resolution & Transformative Justice Process		

Conflict Resolution Overview

A formal conflict resolution process will start when an involved party directly contacts InterAccess and asks for conflict resolution assistance.

Informed by anti-oppression principles, *Rhizomatic Pedagogies* (RP) and *Terra Firma* (TF) will approach all disputes with a Transformative/Restorative Justice (TJ) model in mind.

In any given situation involving perpetuated harm, the InterAccess team will prioritise the perspective and safety of the party or parties who are the most vulnerable and at the greatest risk. Likewise, it will seek to prioritise accountability and restored relations over punishment and ostracism. InterAccess recognises that the TJ process requires consent from all parties before proceeding. Furthermore, InterAccess acknowledges that no conflict resolution process is one-size-fits-all; communities may have culturally specific and distinct conflict resolution methods. Where an involved party does not wish to participate in the standard TJ-based conflict resolution offered by InterAccess, InterAccess will explore other harm-reduction options with them.

Methods of Reporting

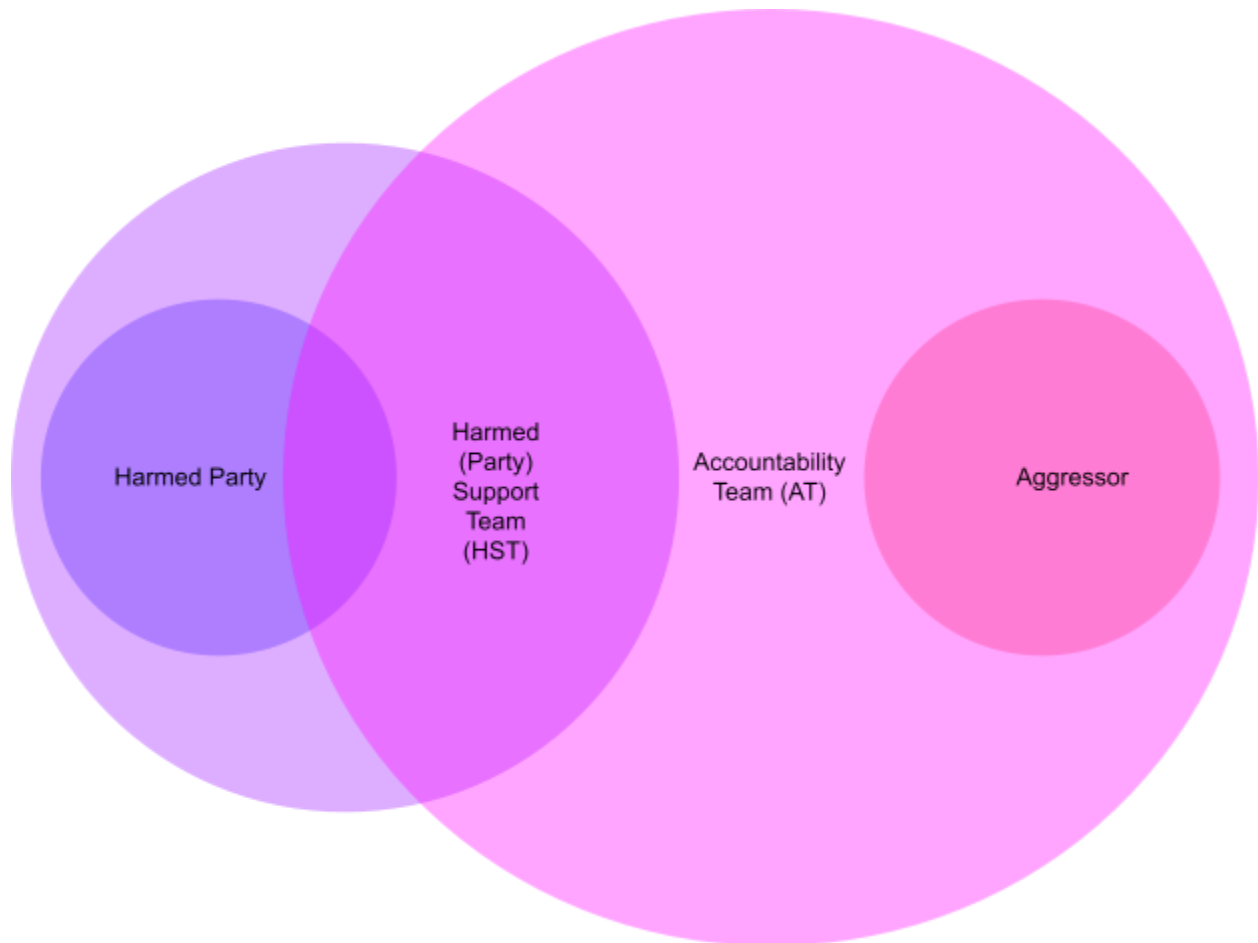
- Via email
- Via anonymous feedback form

	Proposed Solutions
Option A	Parties in conflict resolve issues with one another, with InterAccess present.
Option B	Harmed and/or perpetrating party(ies) are given the option to participate in programs asynchronously. Only one party needs to agree to asynchronous learning.
Option C	A Transformative Justice (TJ, also known as Restorative Justice (RJ)) approach is proposed by InterAccess. Conflicts will be mediated either by InterAccess, a partner group if a partner has capacity/is willing, or by St. Stephen's Community House.

	This option requires consent from both sides.
Option D	If any of the parties in conflict refuse to participate in any of the available conflict resolution processes or asynchronous learning, InterAccess will seek to make learning materials available offline so that the conflicting parties can continue to learn without encountering each other at all. Only one party needs to agree to offline learning.
Option E	If the harm done by the aggressor(s) is serious, InterAccess will require the aggressor(s) to undergo anti-oppression training and transformative justice reconciliation with the harmed party(ies) before fully rejoining InterAccess programs. If the harmed party(ies) does not desire reconciliation, the aggressor(s) must still undergo anti-oppression/harm reduction training and then have their participation in the program limited to offline materials.
Option F	If the aggressors do not wish to participate in any restorative procedures, they cannot participate in or access programming. They are welcome to change their decision and undergo restorative procedures, and regain access to programming at any time, for up to one month after the program closes.
Option G	Harmed party(ies) work with InterAccess to create custom conflict resolution plan.

The Transformative Justice Process | An example

The following is what a transformative justice process **could** look like.



Overview

Step 1. Gathering: form a harmed support team (HST)

- Who do the harmed party and their allies want in the HST?
- What are the goals of the HST?
- What are the expectations, skills, commitment levels, and availability of the HST?
- What resources does the HST need to prepare and gain confidence for the work ahead?

Step 2. Expanding: form an accountability team (AT)

- What experiences do they have with the type of harm done, transformative justice, or community work?
- What other skills could they offer the TJ process (e.g., patience, clarity, compassion, political vision, commitment)?

- What leverage did they have in the community (e.g., positive reputation, community elder, financial resources, connections)?
- Would it be helpful if the AT was drawn from diverse communities across lines of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, organizational affiliation, and age? For example, if the aggressor is a middle-class, straight, white male with a pattern of not listening, maybe a working-class woman of colour would be less effective than a predominantly white and/or male AT.
- And, finally: Do they know both parties?

Step 3. Communicating: defining the relationship between teams

THE HARMED SUPPORT TEAM:

- Focuses on the harmed party's needs and desires throughout the TJ process.
- Educates themselves about TJ by checking out resources in books/zines, on the web, and in our communities.
- Supports the harmed's healing process as an individual and within the TJ process.
- Initiates, monitors, and evaluates the aggressor's accountability process through the AT.
- Communicates between the AT and the harmed party, making sure the AT knows the harmed party's needs and gives the harmed party updates of the AT's process while respecting how much/little they should know with respect to their healing process.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM:

- Commits to a survivor-centred praxis in their work with the aggressor.
- Educated themselves about TJ to support the aggressor's transformation with compassion. (Some ATs may also have to balance taking the time to be fully prepared with the urgency of transforming the aggressor's behaviour.)
- Works directly with the aggressor to achieve accountability and transformation.
 - As a group, the AT will have to gain the aggressor's trust and commit to honouring their humanity. For example, they can consistently reiterate their commitment to TJ rather than to legal or retaliatory justice.)
- Conveys and translates ideas and suggestions from the HST to the aggressor. For example, the AT can develop specific exercises and discussion tactics to convey the concerns of the harmed and the HST to the aggressor.

Step 4. Storming & developing: create a transformative justice (TJ) plan

A TJ plan may include:

- Our goals: what do we want as the outcome of this transformative justice plan?
- Ideas for how to first approach the aggressor.
- Warning signs of covert aggression from the aggressor.
- Backlash precautions (i.e., maintaining the harmed's safety and using our

leverage were the aggressor to respond by counter-organizing or trying to contact the harmed).

- Establishing guidelines for meetings with the aggressor (e.g., building trust between the aggressor and the AT and offering resources, "homework," and goals for each meeting).
- Working with the aggressor's accountability process, which involves overcoming denial and minimization, improving survivor empathy, changing distorted attitudes about power/privilege/ gender, learning good consent and intimacy practices, and co-creating a relapse prevention plan.

Step 5. Summoning: prepare for the first approach

- Where and when will the first approach occur?
- Which members of the AT will approach the aggressor?
- How will they invite the aggressor to the first meeting?
- Where, when, and how will they tell the aggressor that a harmed party seeks the aggressor's accountability for the harm done?
- How will the AT communicate with the HST about the first approach?

Step 6. Building: the first meeting

During the first meeting, the aggressor may experience the following range of feelings:

Ganged up on. To minimise the chances of this happening, the team can limit the first meeting to a select number of AT members.

Denial, outrage, remorse, shame, guilt, fear, and defensiveness. The AT will benefit from keeping good boundaries and using active listening here.

Betrayal by the survivor and AT. It's recommended to build trust and safety right away by compassionately (but critically) listening to the aggressor's experience, giving them space to feel betrayal and denial, and allowing them to offer some input on their TJ process.

Overwhelmed by too much information. To avoid this, the AT may decide to keep things simpler at first.

During this first meeting, the following may be communicated via a combination of writing and verbal communication (writing helps to document what was said for future reference):

- The harm done, and the identity of the harmed party
- The role of the AT, including these details:
 - The AT is there to serve the needs of the harmed party and the community.
 - The AT will support the aggressor in their accountability and transformation process.

- The AT will provide the aggressor with a simplified statement or version of the harmed party's experience rather than a detailed account that could lead to a debate over what happened.
- The AT will acknowledge that the aggressor's intention and experience might be different than the harmed party's.
- The AT will set clear boundaries around the survivor (i.e., do not contact the harmed party).
- The AT should value the aggressor's contributions to the community.
- The AT and the aggressor shall have a mutual interest in stopping acts or tendencies of harm in the activist community.
- The AT may invite the aggressor to bring their needs and goals to the next meeting.
- The AT should be prepared to:
 - Validate the aggressor's story, feelings, and experience, if offered; repeat their support of the survivor's experience if the aggressor tries to blame the harmed party for what happened.
 - Deflect questions or challenges about the incident, violation, process, or the harmed party until the next meeting.
 - Avoid volunteering any additional information "to be helpful."
 - Ask if the aggressor had friends to process with afterwards.
 - Establish that the aggressor should communicate with the AT through a predesignated point person.

Step 7. Transforming: meetings with the accountability team

Regular meetings between the aggressor and the entire AT.

- Generous time for check-ins and emotional processing is recommended.
- Personal feelings such as anger and judgement may arise.
 - It will be helpful to consistently reemphasize the entire team's commitment to TJ-not to punishment-and to building a climate of trust and respect.
- The initial meeting or meetings will allow the AT to give an overview of the process expected going forward.
- The AT should solicit boundaries from everyone and develop shared goals, ensuring a place for the aggressor's voice in the process.
- AT members may play expected and unexpected roles, such as supporter, friend, challenger, therapist, investigator, contract negotiator, and judge.
- The AT and HST should always work together to make sure that the process/conversation is survivor-centred.
- The TJ process is guided by the goals of the TJ plan.
- The AT may also focus on the shared goals produced with the aggressor. The AT should respect the aggressor's needs while prioritising the safety of the harmed party and of the community.

Ongoing meetings may focus on:

- Challenging cultures of violence: Pacing the information slowly, starting with definitions and statistics; studying and discussing relevant zines and resources; repeating our understanding of harm and how it differs from the criminal definition and mainstream myths; exploring the difference between intent and impact; and challenging the primacy that harm culture gives to an aggressor's intent over the consequences of the aggressor's behaviour for the survivor and the community.
- Exploring unrelated scenarios: Describing situations involving culpability, intent, and manipulation, and then connecting them to the incident; asking what taking responsibility would look like even if the aggressor were blameless.
- Focusing on the survivor's experience: Asking the aggressor how something looks and feels from the harmed party's perspective; asking, "What did you take from that statement?"; asking who got what they wanted; restating the survivor's experience; pressing for feelings and empathy; understanding the meaning and practice of good consent.
- Connecting with the aggressor: Connecting to their activism and using various anti-oppression frameworks that would be familiar to them; involving the aggressor in problem-solving; pushing the aggressor to places of discomfort; asking the aggressor to imagine they are on an AT for someone else; assigning and discussing homework; practising active listening and mirroring.
- Debriefing with the HST after every meeting or two to check in with the TJ process.
- Trusting the experiences and wisdom of the group members.
- Observing behaviours and statements are one way to measure change, but we realised that there was no guarantee that they are really "getting" it. Given the difficulty in measuring our success, it will be crucial to set clear goals for the aggressor from the beginning of this long process of transformation.

GOALS FOR the aggressor:

- LEARN about the systems and vocabulary related to harm reduction in that specific context.
- RESPECT physical and communication boundaries for the harmed party's safety.
- EXAMINE their past behaviour for other experiences of harm; acknowledge and be accountable to that history, and keep the community safe in the present and future if this is repeated behaviour.
- SEEK professional counselling for aggressors or join an aggressor recovery group.
- SELF-EDUCATE to deeply understand the incident, their intent and behaviour, and the subsequent harm to the harmed party and the community.
- DISCUSS & MODEL consent behaviour for future relationships.
- COMMIT to acts of restitution to the harmed party and the community.

Step 8. Evaluating: lessons learned

The situation—and many acts of harm in activist communities—may involve coercion, manipulation, and/or entitlement, not sheer physical force, and reflect how deeply myths and culture are embedded within anti-oppression circles. Systemic entitlement, racism, and ignorance of violent cultural tendencies can make it that much harder for an aggressor to recognize their behaviour as harmful.

It may be hard to balance the harmed party's need for confidentiality with the need to warn the community about the aggressor, and this may remain an unresolved tension in our TJ process.

The harmed party's and the aggressor's transformations will need to follow their own paths, which might mean that the aggressor might be ready to offer restitution before or after the harmed party is ready to receive it.

It's important to be serious about communication between the AT and the HST.

The aggressor's accountability process may get so involved that the HST can start to lose track of the harmed party's healing process. Both teams should put the harmed party's well-being at the centre of the TJ process through things like expanding our support circle, reading zines together, and making a trigger plan. (A trigger plan is a way for the harmed party to identify and overcome their triggers. When they experience a traumatic memory or reaction, the HST can develop a trigger plan with the harmed party to help them identify what is happening and the steps they need to take to feel safe.)

Resources:

<http://www.blackandpink.org/wp-content/uploads/Beautiful-Difficult-Powerful.pdf>

http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/G5_Toward_Transformative_Justice.pdf