

[If anyone reading this would like to elaborate on any of this text, or have links to good resources people can look into for more info, please share your edits / link with aptpspokescouncil@gmail.com]

What is a Spokescouncil?

A large group made up of smaller groups that come together for a common purpose, usually to organize direct action and/or civil disobedience. The spokescouncil provides a framework to coordinate the larger action, while the smaller groups, known as affinity groups, make decisions about their specific actions. Each small group has one spokes person who speaks in the spokescouncil.

Why Organize this Way (in general)

- Increased Coordination.
- All affinity groups share a common goal or purpose and usually some shared agreements on guidelines, messaging, etc
- Spokescouncil allows affinity groups to communicate with each other and team up when appropriate.
- Increased Security. Details of each affinity group's action can remain known only to the affinity group members. Planning stays private.
- Shared Resources. Working groups like media, messaging, legal support, support all AG's

Summary A spokescouncil is a way to coordinate a large scale action with multiple moving parts, while allowing autonomy and self determination, as well as a wide variety of activities, for the affinity groups within the spokes council.

What is An Affinity Group?

- a small (usually 5 to 15 people) group of people who know and trust each other who come together for a particular purpose, often direct action or civil disobedience.

How are Affinity Groups Formed?

- a group of people who you already know
- a social group
- prior political activity
- sometimes even through your job.

· ad hoc formation at spokescouncil meeting or action training with people you don't know well, but do get to know over the course of an action.

How Do Affinity groups Work?

- Each affinity groups decides their own internal process and structure, though consensus is the norm
- Each affinity groups decides if they are open to new members or not
- Each affinity group decides if their action will be publicized or not.
- Affinity groups plan their actions independently with the intention of advancing the larger goal of the spokescouncil.
 - Affinity groups are represented by one person (“a spoke”) at the spokes meetings
 - Affinity groups may choose a name for their group.

Why Organize this way?

- Affinity groups in a spokes council allow for sharing resources, requesting support, and coordinating actions
- quicker decision making during actions based on prior agreements and/or knowing each other well.
- higher level of security and mobility

Clusters

A cluster is a group of affinity group within a spokescouncil who decide to work together on a particular action, activity, or in a particular area.

A case study...

Here are links to materials for a spokescouncil and shutdown actions in 2003 in San Francisco. Our spokescouncil is structured differently, but this is a good detailed example of the kinds of organizing that are possible.

- <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2013/03/19/18733862.php>
- <http://web.archive.org/web/20030319061304/http://actagainstar.org/>
- <http://web.archive.org/web/20030401220922/http://www.actagainstar.org/article.php?list=type&type=23>>