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FOR TWO OR TWO HUNDRED:
A WORKBOOK FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

C. A. Brimmer
University of Northern Iowa
July, 2017

ABSTRACT

Designed for young people who want to develop a sense of active citizenship through social justice and community organizing; this workbook is founded on four main components: autoethnography/personal narrative, research based in critical pedagogy, social justice methodologies and literature. Activist profiles and exercises introduce the reader to a leadership style based in critical consciousness. The reader is part of the text as they complete exercises and fill in their own blanks, contributing ideas and carrying out practices related to various aspects of community organizing. This work book is designed for beginning activists who are new to concepts such as social location, intersectionality, power, privilege, and oppression, and root causes in relation to social justice issues. Thus, while academically informed, the workbook is written using language which is easily understood by those in late high school or early college.

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This Study by: C. A. Brimmer

Entitled: For Two or Two Hundred: A Workbook For Making a Difference

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies

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DEDICATIONS

For Alex Jordan Brimmer,

You never let me give up and you believed in me when I did not believe in myself.

For Jackie,

You helped make me want to change the world, and reminded me that changing the world requires a big heart, lots of passion, and laughter.

For Carli the Wonder Pup,

You reminded me to take breaks and play.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In no way would this have been possible without my husband, Alex who dealt with all of the ups and downs, and who laughed with me until everything felt manageable again. As the person who made sure I ate, slept, and practiced self-care, you would not let me give up on my dream.

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Dear Reader,

Do you want to change the world? Each person has the ability to create change in themselves, and in their communities. You have the ability to create the change you need and to build yourself as an engaged citizen of your community. These changes may take place in your interpersonal relationships at school, work, or in your local neighborhood. All people can amplify their own voice and the voices of others to build a more socially just and equitable society. What many people do not have is the leadership training which enables you to identify your cause, examine the cause intersectionally, recognize in what ways you can be an asset to a cause, and to create and implement a plan of action. Social justice is when all people live equitably, and my goal in creating this workbook is to help you create a world where that is possible.

Think about what you want to be better in your community, what you think would have a positive impact on the people you care about. Imagine being able to be a part of that impact in a way that feeds your heart while it fills the needs and desires of your community. This workbook will help you grow as a leader as well as create and follow through on a plan that helps create a world in which you want to live. It is necessary to continue to build leaders like you to create and organize of communities that focus on social justice activism. In this workbook you will find various resources to use in developing yourself and your community by building on pre-existing work or developing new, sustainable organizations to develop change.

I began working as an activist in high school when I saw a need for a gay straight alliance (GSA) and began to develop a support space for the LGBTQ+ youth in my Western Massachusetts town. With assistance from educators, peers, and community organizations, a group consisting of two members and an advisor transformed into a

thriving group of 15-30 members. A school that previously struggled to accept LGBTQ+ youth held the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network's Western Massachusetts conference in 2014 and regularly sends students to leadership meetings across the Commonwealth. For me, developing a gay straight alliance was the beginning of changing my community. However, for myself and my community it is far from the end.

Through activism, I have witnessed others desiring to make change who did not have the tools to do so. That is why I have developed this workbook. Each chapter works with four main components: autoethnography/personal narrative, research based in critical pedagogy, social justice methodologies and literature, interviews with other activists about their experiences, and exercises to help you develop a leadership style based in critical consciousness. I have researched the information in this text in several ways. The first is autoethnography or a study of myself and my experiences as an activist. To supplement my own experiences, I have worked with activists involved in various movements who inhabit a range of identities. This workbook pulls from a significant amount of research based in social justice activism and critical pedagogy (teaching) that engages everyone in the room, in this case, you as a reader. I wrote this workbook at a reading level appropriate for high school students, and sought to accommodate diverse learning styles during the design process by adding space for notes to be taken. I hope that you will find this workbook accessible and practical as you work toward change and social justice.

The first section will aid in your understanding of Power, Privilege, and Oppression (PPO) and the three primary ways these are implemented. Then you identify yourself and your passions through activities that engage you in identity mapping,

intersectionality, and help you gain cultural awareness. You will work towards identifying your own areas of power and privilege as well as how you are oppressed. Recognizing the root causes of types of oppression will round out this section along with power mapping your issue.

After you have identified yourself, your passion and the work you want to do, the third section of this workbook focuses on developing a plan to raise social consciousness and social justice in your community. This includes different types of activism, identifies how you can be most useful to a movement, and offers suggestions about how to manage awareness about your movement and create a succession plan. Putting your plan into action is covered in the sixth section of the workbook which includes calls to action, recruiting assistance, developing relationships and the distribution of your message.

Throughout this workbook, you will be asked to record the steps you are taking as a leader, as an ally, or as an accomplice. The importance of documenting the work you do will be covered in the fifth section "Documenting Change: Prove It Happened, Prove It Mattered." All work for positive change towards a more socially just and equitable community matters. Understanding your own and your group's impact helps to determine how you will organize the next time. And, I hope, there will always be a next time.

As I mentioned previously, this workbook is designed with accessibility in mind and thus there are a few features you should know about before continuing. Throughout this text, you will find boxes labeled "Key Terms" which highlight specific words or concepts which will help you in social justice work. The key terms are bolded and defined within the text. You can also find the terms in the glossary at the end of the

book, which also has other terms you might encounter while engaging in social justice and community organizing work. There are also boxes labeled “Notes” on many pages throughout the text. In these boxes you can take notes, jot down ideas, doodle or write questions which come to mind as you read. The note boxes are for you to make the workbook more accessible for yourself! Lastly, you will find questions for you to answer with blank spaces beneath or between text. You do not need to use the whole blank, but if you do that is fine! If you need more room continue your response on an additional piece of paper and insert it in between the pages. This book is about you. Engage with it!

Either you picked up this workbook hoping to make a difference, or someone saw your leadership abilities to do so. As educator Horace Mann once said, “Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.” The title of this workbook, *For Two or Two Hundred* reflects my philosophy that efforts to build community are always worth it. Through this workbook I call on you to change the world, if only the world within your reach. So whether that is for a few people or a few hundred people, you can create change, this workbook will help facilitate that change for you and for the communities in which you organize.

In Solidarity for Equity,

C. Brimmer

CHAPTER 1

POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND OPPRESSION

Autoethnography: PPO and Me

I am many identities: queer, trans, disabled, student, wife. I am white, fat, and I can pass as lower middle class with student debt and credit cards. It has been several years since I was actively involved with a church, but at one time I found a home in a Pentecostal church in Massachusetts. This church was determined that I would renounce my queerness in the name of God, and I was determined to be both queer and Christian. Similarly, I believed that no matter how I identified, queerness was more than okay. I believed my peers had the right to be themselves even if my church hated queerness and, by extension, me.

For nearly a year, I was actively involved in this church. When I began attending, I let members of the church know I was gay and, after some time, they stopped asking about it. I was not dating anyone. I did not tell them I was still the president of the high school gay straight alliance. From my perspective, they did not need to know I did not believe everything they did. I felt that even if God hated me for being gay, God did not hate other gays for their queerness. My God was a god of Love, and it was my job, that even if I was going to hell, to make sure others would be okay.

The problem began my senior year of high school. I was out and proud at school, closeted and quiet at church. The GSA had grown to almost twenty students and our rapport with the principal was strengthening weekly. The GSA advisor, the vice president of the club, and myself as president, were slated to speak to the entirety of the high school faculty and staff about heterosexist and ableist language commonly used in

our school. That morning, as I was at my locker I was greeted by a familiar voice in an unfamiliar location. I turned to see my church's youth pastor at the end of the hallway talking to another youth. I approached him, "What are you doing here?" I asked tentatively. He explained that he was now a long-term science substitute at our school. I spent the rest of my Monday trying to act "straighter."

In the afternoon, my best friend wrapped his arm around my waist. He was confused as I shrunk against the wall, hiding from the parade of faculty entering the choir room. When the youth pastor walked past, I inhaled sharply. Acutely aware of my exaggerated inhale, my best friend understood.

As we entered the faculty meeting, I knew the first item on the agenda would mean I could no longer hide from the Church. The GSA sought change from our teachers—asked them to interrupt students utilizing phrases such as, "That's so gay" or "that's retarded." We wanted better from our school. We wanted our school to be a space where queer and disabled students could feel safe enough to get an education. I did not look up the entire presentation. I was ashamed and proud at the same time. What we were doing was important, and, yet, I wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible. At one point, I bravely scanned the crowd for the pastor and could not locate him. Somehow not knowing where he was and what he was thinking was scarier than knowing. Despite my fears and anxiety I felt the need to speak up, to seek, and make, change.

I wanted to challenge the institutionally sanctioned oppression which results from language used by my peers. The task was daunting as the language often remained unchallenged by my instructors--the very people meant to guide us to be better citizens. When our presentation finished, I forgot about questions, the list of resources, or that my

best friend was there. I was terrified of being damned by God, and I knew the church would have something to say about my actions.

It took until the Thursday for the call asking me to attend a meeting at the church with the youth pastor, his wife, and the senior pastor. At the meeting, I was told, in no uncertain terms, I was going to hell, the queer agenda had no place in schools, and that they were "concerned about my motives and felt the need to protect other children from" me. I tried to explain my belief that every student had the right to feel safe in school. Their perspective maintained that homosexuality is sin, and tolerance of sin is also sin. They explained I was no longer welcome in the church unless I could renounce my gayness. I was no longer welcome if I could not change myself for their God.

I spent a lot of time pondering if I was right to ask for tolerance from my instructors on behalf of queer students. Was it about my peers being just or about me trying to ignore the sin of my queerness? I knew that the Church believed queerness was wrong, the entire congregation believed association with queerness was a sin. For many days following, I hated myself for being gay. How could I love someone hated by God, even if that someone was myself?

I began to wonder, did I want to believe in a God that sponsored hate more than love? The church accused the LGBTQ+ agenda of pulling me away from God. The institution of the Assemblies of God church propagated hate toward the LGBTQ+ community, adopting a zero-tolerance policy with regards to sexual or gender deviance. The church's influence, as an institution, crossed to the state institution of the school when the youth pastor began to teach there. I faced interpersonal oppression, first from my peers and then from my ministers. That interpersonal oppression became internalized hetero- and cis-sexism, or oppression toward me that I believed was not wrong and may

have even been right. I had learned in the institutions of the church and education system that I was lesser than for being queer. While one, the Assembly of God church had intentionally sanctioned their heterosexism, the education system had permitted it knowingly through student language.

Interpersonal oppression, permitted by my school, inspired me to organize my fellow GSA members to address heterosexism and ableism in our environment. My experience within the Assemblies of God church caused me to internalize the heterosexism of the church and feel shame and anxiety while I requested aid in ending institutional heterosexism and ableism at the high school. A combination of interpersonal and institutional oppression from ministers at the church then resulted in my removal from the church community and internalized heterosexism made me blame myself for this removal. Ultimately, however, the interactions between each institution and person lead me to believe my actions, in speaking to the faculty and staff at the high school, were worth being kicked out of the church.

Navigating varying levels of oppression can be difficult. The experiences above show that addressing multiple levels of oppression may be necessary to address the issues you identify in your community. In the following section you will work through the concepts of power, privilege, and oppression while learning about and identifying different forms of oppression and the root causes of different situations involving oppression of marginalized communities.

Working Through Power, Privilege, and Oppression

We live in a culture, knowingly or not, operating in systems of power, privilege, and oppression (PPO). This chapter will work through these systems and discuss three types of privilege and oppression: internalized, interpersonal, and institutional, which

are connected to various personal identities. I utilize this chapter as a base for this workbook because it is vital to understand PPO in order to understand your social location and the causes of the injustices you wish to work against.

Power is defined as the ability to influence systems or exercise control over people (Adams et al.). A person has **privilege** when they are entitled to unearned benefits based on a dominant social identity. Privilege is directly connected to power because it is people with power in social systems and interactions who have privilege. It is important not to confuse privileges with rights. A right is something all people should have access to and being denied access to certain rights is part of oppression. **Oppression** refers to the injustices faced by non-normative or non-dominant identities. In simpler terms oppression refers to unfair treatment based on difference from what is deemed normative. "Normal," like gender, class, and race is a **social construct**, meaning that it changes depending on where and when the term is being used. "Normal" in the United States is not necessarily "normal" in Europe, other countries, or cultures. Similarly, what is "normal" now, was not necessarily "normal" in the year 1950.

Key Terms

- **Power**
- **Privilege**
- **Oppression**
- **Social Construct**
- **Normative**

Notes

Normative is also a social construct. While normal, in terms of identity, does not exist, **normative** refers to the dominant identities in a social setting. In the United States normative/dominant identities are whiteness, heterosexuality, cisgender male, middle-to-upper-class, able-bodied, well educated, and Christian.

With discussion of PPO it is necessary to explain **intersectionality** because "no individual lives every aspect of [their] existence within a single identity category" (Chun et al. 923). Intersectionality is a theory of both power and identity named by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989 which shows how power is unevenly distributed and works in differentiated ways between individuals and groups. Privileged identities are afforded power in institutions and social groups disproportionately to the power which is afforded to oppressed or marginalized identities.

Each deviation from normative increases the level of oppression an individual face. A black, cisgender, woman is oppressed for being both black and a woman but maintains a certain level of privilege in the fact that she is still **cisgender**, or identifies with the sex the doctors assigned her body at birth. Audre Lorde, a black, lesbian, activist, and poet once stated that she had "learned that

Key Terms

- Intersectionality
- Cisgender

Notes

oppression and intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sizes and colors and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no hierarchies of oppression" (Lorde). For example, Lorde's strong belief that all issues of oppression are everyone's issues of oppression asks me to recognize that while I am oppressed for being queer, trans, and disabled, my whiteness comes with particular privileges and power and thus a responsibility to work toward liberation for people of color as well.

Unfortunately, not all white people will perceive the issues of people of color as their own. It is difficult to recognize one's own privilege. All white people do benefit from racism in a system that perpetuates white privilege and therefore participate in the system of racism. For example, whiteness, as a cultural norm within the United States, is a factor in salary--as a white person you might not ask for more money than a person of color because of your skin, but there is a significant likelihood of this occurring especially if you are also a male. According to Eileen Patten of the Pew Research Center, black men averaged $15 per hour compared to the average white man's wage of $21 per hour (Patten).

Activist Profile

Similarly, all men benefit from sexism and therefore participate in sexism as a system of oppression. White men making $21 per hour to white woman's $17, a 20% difference. This is ultimately the way –isms work; they are set up to privilege some and maintain others' oppressed status. Not all privileged people believe that these systems are morally or ethically right, however they all benefit from the systems that privilege them. The ways that –isms are institutionalized evidence the structure of power and those who are the most privileged are also afforded the most power (Patten).

-Isms are strongly held beliefs which privilege some people over others based on socially constructed understandings of identity. –Isms articulate the idea that certain identities are superior to other identities. The socially constructed identities by which –isms are formed include, but are not limited to: race, class, gender, sex, sexual orientation, romantic orientation, age, ability, and religion. Ultimately, -isms are socially constructed ideals that have extremely real and significant implications/ results. For a partial list of –isms see the box to the right.

The maintenance of this power and of these –isms occurs on several fronts. **Institutional oppression** is systemic and utilizes laws and policies to maintain power

Key Terms

- **Institutional Oppression**
- **Interpersonal Oppression**
- **Internalized Oppression**

-Isms

The following are examples of –isms. For more examples see the glossary beginning on page 92.

Racism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of a racial hierarchy. In the United States this system subordinates people of color for the benefit of white people.

Sexism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of gender in which females/women are subordinated to males/men.

Heterosexism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of a normative sexual or romantic orientation in which non-heterosexual/ non-heteroromantic people are subordinated based on their romantic or sexual orientations

Classism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of superiority and inferiority based on socio-economic class in which the poor are subordinated based on their economic condition.

(Kirk G1-G6, and "Social Justice Social Justice Re-sources: Guide").

Notes

structures on behalf of privileged groups. **Interpersonal oppression** maintains the Otherness of those who deviate from the norm by choice or birth. Finally, **internalized oppression** is the belief of an oppresssed individual that these biased values are true. In internalized oppression an individual holds these biased beliefs against themselves. Someone who is disabled might believe that someone who is able-bodied (or able-minded) is ideal and superior to themselves. For example, I frequently compare my academic performance to my non-disabled, or neurotypical, peers and struggle with the idea that my work in presentations is inherently less valuable because it evidences my stutter and inability to memorize information caused by my PTSD and extreme social anxiety. These three levels of oppression work together, constantly, to maintain power structures that marginalize many for the benefit of some.

Exercises in Identifying Types of Oppression

In this section you will find three scenarios each is representative of one of the three types of oppression mentioned above: institutional, interpersonal, or internalized. While all three work together to maintain power structures they can be identified individually when one is more at play than another.

Scenario 1: Thirteen year old Jackson was walking to school when a classmate, Albert, approached him saying that Jackson was going to be sent back to where he came from. Jackson was confused. He lived only a block away from Albert and had been born in New York City. Jackson's mom was from Mexico and his dad was from Texas. Albert's

dad, a local police officer, believed the town had too many Mexicans taking jobs from "Americans." When Jackson told him he was mistaken Albert punched him.
Does this scenario demonstrate institutional oppression, interpersonal oppression, or internalized oppression?

Scenario 2: Sheryl and Larraine are both in their thirties and want to get married to each other but they live in a state where same-sex marriage is not legal. Regardless, Sheryl asked Larraine to marry her. Their family celebrated their engagement and the minister at their church agreed to perform the ceremony. Shortly after their engagement, a state official proposed a bill that would legalize same-sex marriage in their state, but it has yet to pass the legislature and is expected to be opposed.
Does this scenario demonstrate institutional oppression, interpersonal oppression, or internalized oppression?

Scenario 3: Angel is 16 years old, and he really enjoys dressing up in his sister's clothes when he is alone in the house. The church Angel's family goes to sets very strict gender expectations, and Angel has been raised to believe that those who deviate from the expectations prescribed to their gender will go to hell. Angel believed this message and chose to commit suicide rather than continue living in sin.
Does this scenario demonstrate institutional oppression, interpersonal oppression, or

internalized oppression?

Each of the scenarios above show evidence of how different types of oppression are intertwined. In *Scenario 1* Jackson faces interpersonal oppression in the form of racism from his classmate Albert. Meanwhile Albert's father utilizes his position as a law officer to enforce a form of institutional oppression through the law. *Scenario 2* shows institutionalized oppression. As a general rule, if there are policies or laws involved it is likely related to institutionalized oppression. *Scenario 3* involved internalized oppression which is the result of long term exposure to oppression on both institutional and interpersonal levels. Angel had been exposed to his family's church's oppressive beliefs toward gender variance their entire life and having been exposed to this hate during their formative years believed the church's views were right. Angel had internalized the oppressive viewpoints of their church.

(Answers: *Scenario 1* is an example of interpersonal oppression. *Scenario 2* is an example of institutionalized oppression. *Scenario 3* is an example of internalized oppression).

Key Terms

- **Root Cause**

Exercises in Identifying Root Causes

Understanding that all levels of oppression are rooted in belief systems that privilege one group over others, or cites a specific group as dominant compared to other groups, is important when organizing around social justice issues. For example: the **root cause**, or ultimate reason for the oppression Sheryl and Larraine experience in *Scenario 2* is heterosexism, which is the belief that heterosexual individuals are

superior to non-heterosexuals and therefore deserve more rights and privileges to the allegedly inferior group. Heterosexism may also be shown in more subtle ways, a heterosexual individual may not feel superior to non-heterosexuals but they may think that being gay is weird, "not normal" or even sinful. Or they may simply assume everyone is heterosexual unless otherwise stated. All of these are ways in which socially constructed beliefs around heterosexuality or heteronormativity have real implications on Sheryl and Larraine, including the laws and policies which prohibit their marriage.

Recognizing root causes helps you to identify what actions to take during organizing protests for social change. The following exercise asks you to look at what issues are being faced and name the root cause or the reason. For example, you might examine the origination of the rules in institutional oppression, or the belief structures of the attacker in interpersonal oppression. For example, in *Scenario 1* above, the cause of the interaction was racism, Albert's father had taught him to believe that white people were better than those of other races. In Scenarios 4-6 attempt to identify the root causes of each oppression, please note that the root cause may be more than one –ism.

Scenario 4 A white female student walks across the campus of a primarily white institution showing off a realistic new sword she had gotten for cosplay purposes. No one asks her any questions or calls the police. The next year, a black male student at the same school is carrying a hot glue gun for a class project. The campus police are called about a black man carrying a gun and the campus is put on alert to a possible active shooter and then a four-hour lockdown.

What do you see as the root cause of this scenario?

Scenario 5 At a Catholic School in Virginia a regulation states that attire for and guests

at the prom must be gender-appropriate. Alice and Pat have been dating since their sophomore year at the same Catholic school. Alice purchased a dress and Pat rented a tuxedo as she was uncomfortable wearing a dress. The school informs the same-sex couple that they could not attend prom as a couple and that Pat would be unable to wear the tuxedo she had rented.

What do you see as the root cause of this scenario?

Scenario 6 Steven's friends are attending a lecture at their University tonight and invite him, last minute, to join them. Because he is deaf, Steven contacts the event organizers to ask if there would be an American Sign Language interpreter to translate the lecture. They informed him that there was no time and no budget to hire one. Steven informs his friends that he won't be joining them at the lecture because he feels he would not be able to fully participate without an interpreter to assist.

What do you see as the root cause of this scenario?

(Answers: *Scenario 4* is an example of institutional racism. *Scenario 5* is an example of both institutional sexism, institutional cissexism, and institutional heterosexism. *Scenario 6* is an example of institutional ableism).

Each of the above scenarios provide examples of root causes or the reasons behind a given situation occurring. The individuals in *Scenario 4* who followed community safety guidelines and called in the report of a possibly armed black man may

Notes

have intended to keep the campus safe, but that the definitely armed white woman faced no reports to the police is a sign of both sexism and racism. In addition, that the police pursued the matter aggressively before gathering further information evidences institutional racism within police forces. This scenario was based on an actual event which happened at a liberal arts college in May 2017. (Workneh)

In *Scenario 5* we see sexism play a role within the school's policy that requires gender appropriate clothing and guests. Gender appropriate clothing is also cissexist, not permitting trans or gender variant attendees to wear clothes which match gender identity. The sexism and cissexism of the policy translates into heterosexism because gender appropriate guests refers to guests as the "opposite" sex. Ultimately, you see three different "-sexisms" at play in this scenario all of which can be identified as contributors to the root causes of the situation.

Scenario 6 recognizes ableism as the root cause of Steven's situation. Institutional ableism is seen when the institution or group which organized the event failed to plan for the participation of deaf or hard of hearing individuals at their lecture. That Steven would have to ask for the accommodations in advance and that he had no time to do so, in addition to the fact that the organizers did not plan financially for an interpreter, made the event inaccessible to Steven and others like him.

Recognizing the root causes of these situations enables people to fight them more proficiently by addressing the policies, guidelines, and assumptions which institutionalize them. Root causes situate individuals coming from specific social locations in either advantaged or disadvantaged positions in organizations and societies. Knowing your social location enables you to recognize the ways in which you might be privileged or oppressed in particular environments and circumstances.

An Exercise in Learning Your Social Location

The following exercise is designed to help you identify your social location. It is a popular activity in social justice organizations and meetings, and you may have done it before. Typically people call this a "privilege walk", and it is done with a group of people in a room all beginning in a straight line, side by side. Each statement elicits a movement forward or backwards by those to whom it applies; if the statement does not apply, you do not move. Groups usually partake in this activity to show the differences in social locations based on differing identities.

In this case, you will use a game board of sorts to track your positions. I recommend a sticky note to mark where you are as you read down the list following the directions provided by each line. Begin where it says "start here" and move as directed by the statements. If a statement says to move one space forward move your marker toward higher numbers. If it says to move backwards move to the next space with a lower number. For example if your marker is on "start here" and you're told to move one space back you would move to –1. If you are told to move forward from that space you would move back to "start here". After you have completed reading the statements and following the directions, complete the follow up questions to help you process what you have learned about yourself and power, privilege, and oppression**.**

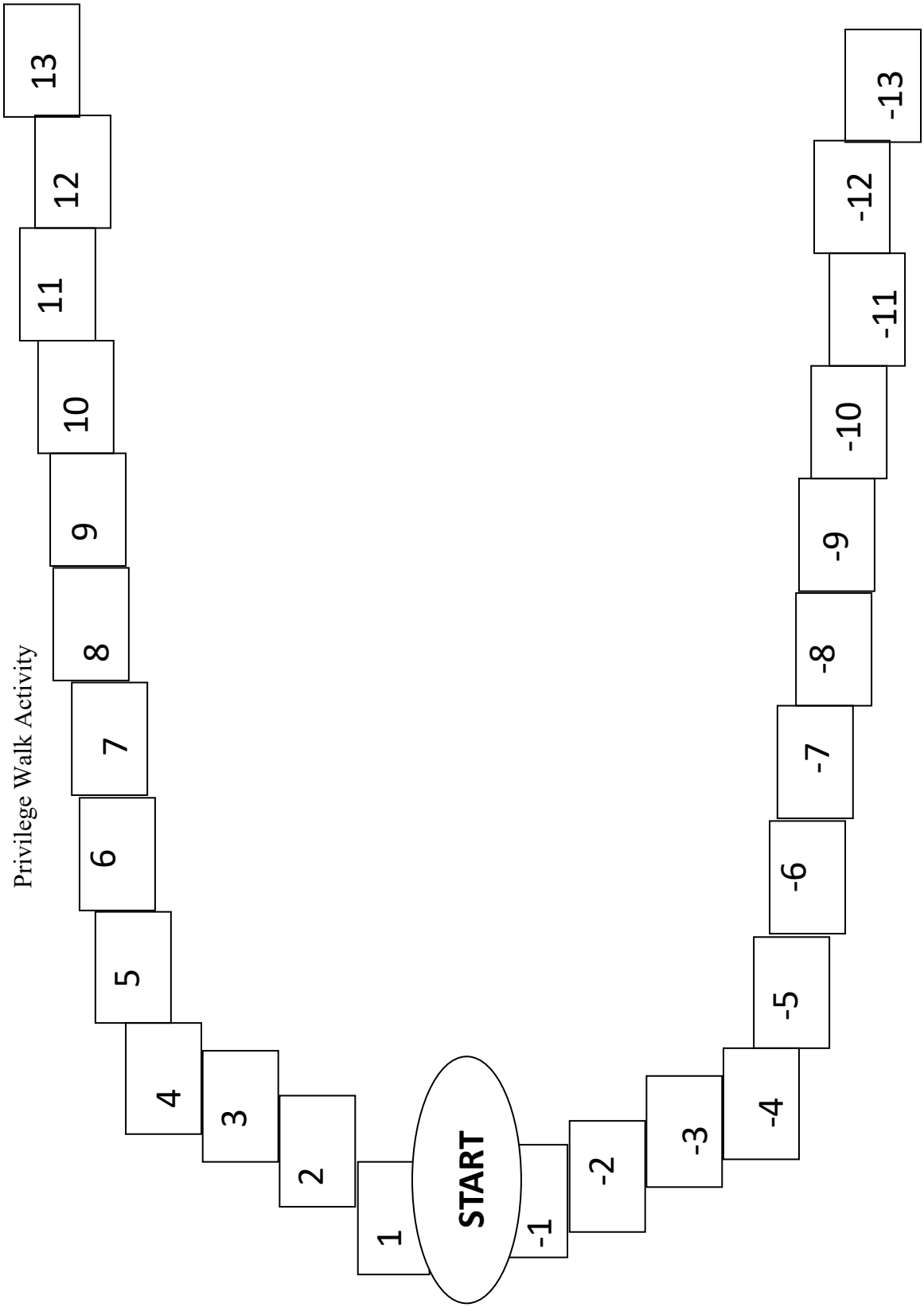
Privilege Walk Statements

1. If English is your first language, move one space forward.
2. If either of your parents graduated from college move one space forward.
3. If you have visible or invisible disabilities move one space backward.
4. If your work and school holiday coincide with religious holidays that you celebrate move one step forward.
5. If you have been bullied or made fun of based on something you cannot change (ie. your gender, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation) move one space backward.
6. If one of your parents was ever laid off or unemployed not by choice move one space backward.
7. If your ancestors were forced to come to the United States not by choice move one space backward.
8. If there were more than 50 books in your house growing up move one space forward.
9. If you took out loans for your education move one space back.
10. If you have ever felt unsafe walking alone at night move one space back.
11. If you can go shopping and not be followed around the store move one space forward.
12. If you frequently see positive representations of people like you in the media move one space forward.
13. If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence move one space forward.
14. If you were sexually active with multiple people and it would improve your social reputation among peers move one space forward.

15. If the existence of one of your identities has never been called into question move one space back.
16. If you were raised in a single-parent household, move one space back.
17. If you have been a victim of violence because of your race, gender, class, age, or sexual orientation, move one space back.
18. If members of your identity group are portrayed on TV in degrading roles more often than not, move one space back.
19. If you or someone you know has been incarcerated for any length of time, move one space back.
20. If you struggle with mental health issues move one space back.
21. If you have ever had to worry about which bathroom to use because of your gender move one space back.
22. If your legal documents have your chosen name on them move one space forward.
23. If you have ever had to skip a meal, or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food while you were growing up move one space back.
24. If you've ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to avoid being judged or ridicule, move one space back.
25. If you are able to go shopping or out to dinner whenever you want move one space forward.
26. If your gender identity is respected without the opinion or intervention of a medical professional, move one space forward.
27. If the history of people with your identity is taught as an elective instead of part of the main curriculum, move one space back.
28. If you still have a functioning relationship with your birth family, move one space

forward.

29. If people usually use and pronounce your name correctly the first time, move one space forward.
30. If people with your body type or attractions are not taught in sex ed, move one space back.


Privilege Walk Activity
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
START
-1
-2
-3
-4
-5
-6
-7
-8
-9
-10
-11
-12
-13

Privilege Walk Follow Up Questions

Utilize the space following each question to reflect on your experience completing the privilege walk exercise. Following these reflection questions is an explanation of what type, or types, of oppression each statement was meant to show.

1. What number block was your marker on at the end of the activity?

2. Did you expect your marker to be somewhere different? How do you feel about where your marker was placed at the end of the activity?

3. Did any of the statements from this activity surprise you? If yes, why?

4. What statement had the most impact for you? Why?

5. Other thoughts about the activity?

This activity is one version of many which exist to facilitate discussions around power, privilege, oppression, and intersectionality. Variations of the statement list I used exist some focusing on specific issues like race or gender and sexuality, others broader and longer versions of lists which reflect wide ranges of issues as I attempted to make this one do. For more information about this activity and the concepts through which it works I recommend looking at Paul Kivel's text *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, as well as, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs' Knapsack Institute.

Explanation of Privilege Walk Statements

1. This statement reflects privilege associated with whiteness and U.S. citizenship.
2. This statement reflects class privilege.
3. This statement reflects oppressions faced by those who are disabled.
4. This statement reflects religious privilege, and in the U.S. Christian privilege because public institutions like schools, frequently close for the Christian religion's primary holy-days. For example, those who celebrate Christmas can always expect to have off school, but those who celebrate Ramadan or Hanukkah will only have the holidays off if it coincides with Christmas.
5. This statement reflects oppressions associated with belonging to marginalized groups.
6. This statement reflects class privilege.
7. This statement reflects oppressions associated with non-whiteness in the U.S.
8. This statement reflects class privilege. Books are expensive and having multiple reflects the ability to purchase texts instead of borrowing from the library, assuming your town and/or school had a library.

9. This statement reflects on oppression associated with classism.
10. This statement reflects gender/sex oppression because women frequently fear travelling alone at night because of the rape culture in the U.S. It may also reflect on racial/ethnic oppression, and oppression toward LGBTQ+ individuals.
11. This statement reflects race privilege. People of color often face issues of racial bias when shopping or visiting public spaces.
12. This statement reflects privileges associated with belonging to dominant social groups.
13. This statement reflect privileges associated with being heterosexual, or being in a heteronormative or perceived heteronormative relationship.
14. This statement reflects sexism, or privileges associated with being male.
15. This statement reflects privileges associated with belonging to dominant social groups.
16. This statement reflects class privilege.
17. This statement reflects oppressions associated with belonging to marginalized social groups.
18. This statement reflects oppressions associated with belonging to marginalized social groups.
19. This statement reflects on oppressions associated with class, gender, and race or ethnicity.
20. This statement reflects oppression associated with able-mindedness.
21. This statement reflects oppression associated with cissexism.
22. This statement reflects oppression associated with cissexism and classism as transgender individuals frequently face legal difficulties and or issues paying high

cost fees to change their legal name to their chosen name.

23. This statement reflects oppression related to classism.
24. This statement reflects oppressions associated with belonging to marginalized groups.
25. This statement reflects class privilege.
26. This statement reflects cisgender privilege.
27. This statement reflects oppressions associated with belonging to marginalized social groups.
28. This statement reflects oppressions associated with being LGBTQ+.
29. This statement reflects privilege related to race/ethnic identities.
30. This statement reflects oppression associated with being LGBTQ+ and with being fat or plus-sized.

Conclusions

The power walk activity can be extremely eye-opening for some people who not realize areas where they were oppressed, like when someone never realized not everyone was afraid to walk alone at night. This activity is also eye-opening for those who find out they have a privilege someone else does not, for example I was confused about how having more than a specific number of books at home growing up was a privilege. Many of our books were second hand, others were received as gifts from friends or family, and those that were purchased, were often purchased with "borrowed" money—otherwise known as credit cards. Other times we went to the library to borrow books and even that is a privilege because not every community has access to a library and not every person has a home address which is often needed to have a library card.

Understanding that you are an intersectional being whose life has been impacted

by power imbalance, privilege, and oppression, may take some time. I encourage you to be conscious of the way you interact with the world. Look for positive media representations of your identities, or ask yourself why you are, or are not able to do certain things that others can, or cannot do. For example, when I first did this activity I was aware that showing affection with my romantic partner could be dangerous depending on where we were but somedays being myself, trying to dismantle the internalized oppression that told me holding their hand or kissing them was not okay. I reflected on the dangers of doing so in terms of physical and emotional threats to both my partner's and my own health. After discussing this with my partner we each figured out what we were comfortable showing as affection in different arena's recognizing that in some places we did not have to be as closeted as others.

Look at how you interact with both other people and institutions that were reflected in the privilege walk activity. Take the time to process what each movement forward and each movement back meant for you as a person. Recognize that you are able to challenge the systems and interactions, especially those that you may have internalized. Examine if, when, and how, you might want to address a given statement but remember that you owe yourself and your community to challenge unearned privleges and to advocate for equitable rights within your environment.

Throughout this chapter, you learned about power, privilege, and oppression, and how they are intersectional issues. The privilege "walk" activity, while not all-encompassing, helped you learn where you may have privilege and where you may be oppressed. In the next chapter, you will learn more about intersectionality and about how to apply it to your life.

CHAPTER 2

IDENTIFYING THE SELF: INTERSECTIONALITY AND YOU

Autoethnography: Understanding Myself

There are people who can go their whole lives without learning of intersectionality. As discussed in the last chapter we are all combinations of various identities, some privileged, some oppressed. No person is ever one-hundred percent in either category. However, those whose privileged identities significantly outnumber their oppressed identities may be able to remain ignorant of the idea.

I am not one of the people able to remain ignorant of this theory of identity and of power. By reading this, you choose to be aware. I cannot pinpoint the instant in which I made the decision; however, in my junior year of high school I took an English class on social issues which continued to raise my awareness. We were given an assignment to creatively map our identities, and it gave me the terminology needed to describe the concept.

I remember all of the ways I failed that assignment but particularly that I was not the only one to miss some key aspects of the rubric. Seeing the ways each of my classmates mapped their identities was enlightening. While I cannot recall specific differences I remember seeing variations in what students of different identities saw as important to include. Students of color made sure to display something related to their race or ethnicity, but white students did not. Queer students like myself included something related to our romantic or sexual orientations, but straight students did not. For the most part, each of us shared what made us different from the majority or the norm in our community or culture. And while we mapped our identities we each failed to connect them to each other, to mark which impacted which.

Since that assignment, I have participated in various identity mapping activities each designed a little differently. Each time I mapped myself, what I saw as important to include shifted. Learning about intersectionality enabled me to learn about privilege and oppression in a way that allowed me to recognize emotions accompanied with each. Understanding intersectionality also taught me that there are no single-issue injustices because we do not live single-issue lives.

Working Through Intersectionality and You

Our identities combine to make us "who we are." How each aspect of our lives comes together, interacts, intersects and engages with the multiverse at large determines our social location. Identity categories may include one's gender identity, religion/faith, class, ethnicity/race, culture, level of education, and ability. No person is ever one identity only. All of our identities are always in play. The various aspects of me, make me who I am, just as the various parts of you culminate in the awesome being reading this text.

Developing a critical awareness of your own identities will help you find your place in social justice movements. You will learn when to take on a leadership role in a movement, or when you are best suited as an ally or accomplice. Only you know your identities, and some of those identities you may be questioning or not know at all. Identities change as do your understandings of them. Some are more static and out of your control like cultural identities, ethnic backgrounds, what your relations with biological family are like. They are firm, you have been raised in them, they cannot be taken away from you. Other aspects of identity like gender, gender expression, sexual/ romantic orientations, affiliations with religions/faith practices, career paths, education

status, and class vary throughout life. However, some of these identities may feel like we have a little more control over or at least the ability to decide whether and how we will express or act upon those identities. These less static identities shift over time. For example you may find yourself, like I did, relabeling your gender identity or claiming a new faith practice. Maybe you did not finish high school, but you have decided to get your G.E.D. and go to a local community college or to join the workforce.

Key Terms

- Additive Approach to Intersectionality

There are many ways people can look at identities. A problematic but commonly used way of understanding identity is through an **additive approach to intersectionality**, meaning that all aspects of identity are added onto each other and in this understanding, can be subtracted at will as well. (DeFrancisco and Palczewski 9-10). An additive approach allows a white, working class woman to walk through a door labeled woman and not have to think about class or ethnicity beyond that door. Others will see her only as a woman but not recognize the privilege of her whiteness or the oppression of her class. Later in their day they may exit the room labeled "Woman" and walk into a space that allows their whiteness but excludes conversations about their class and gender. The individual is only able to be one identity at a time. 1+1+1+1 does not equal one person, but the various ingredients, unmixed and individual, in a bowl, like trail mix.

Figure 1 Image of trailmix as visual example of additive approach to intersectionality.

Key Terms

- Multiplicative Approach to Intersectionality
- Privilege
- Pronouns
- Transgender

A **multiplicative approach** asserts that our ingredients, or different identity aspects, cannot be separated (DeFrancisco and Palczewski 9-10). Like a cake they have been blended together and baked into one being. The same individual we talked about above cannot leave identities behind when they walk through a door, but instead is always white and middle class and woman. 1x1x1=1. This is the theory of identities I will work with going forward. All identities intersect or blend to make up a whole person.

Figure 2 Image of a cake as a visual example of multiplicative approach to intersectionality

Identities are not always static; they change. Cultural understandings become only one way to comprehend gender, sexual orientation, romantic orientation, ethnicity, and class. As you saw at the beginning of this chapter I was designated female at birth, raised as a girl, identified as a lesbian, and saw nothing wrong with the inherent **privilege** of my whiteness. In fact, I did not know that I had privilege, or unearned benefits, because of my whiteness. As I grew older, I developed a wider understanding of my gender identity that was not compatible with the "female" label on my birth certificate or the **pronouns**, she/her/hers, which had always been used to reference me. This changed my understanding of my sexual and romantic orientations because if I am not a woman how could I be a lesbian? Even if I could be a non-woman lesbian, calling myself a lesbian could mean not seeing my **transgender** husband as the amazing man he is.

In high school, texts like *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee*, Othello* by William Shakespeare, and *Night* by Elie Wiesel began to introduce me to the many ways race is seen, but no one informed me that I was practicing **color blind racism** every time I stated "I don't see color, I see a person." For me to claim I did not see someone's race, was for me not to see their whole experience including the everyday overt racism people of color face. It would be very similar to someone telling me they do not see gender, they see _____**.** My **gender identity**, something I call gender-fucked, relates to my everyday experiences of **power, privilege and oppression**. My gender expression, also known as my clothing, mannerisms, speech patterns, and confidence, are all immediately affected by my gender identity. When people claim to not see my gender, they frequently utilize gendered pronouns that make me feel uncomfortable at minimum if not entirely unsafe. My gender identity requires me to make decisions about when, where, and if I can go to the

bathroom in a public place.

This brings up the issue of **identity saliency**, or how much you are aware of various identities when you are in a given situation. For example, when I need to use a

Key Terms

- Color Blind Racism
- Gender Identity
- Power, Privilege & Oppression (PPO)
- Identity Saliency

Notes

Key Terms

- Outing
- Tokenize
- Intersectionality

public bathroom or locker room, when large groups are split into men and women and other similar situations I am extremely conscious of my gender identity because I am not a man nor am I a woman. Every time I am forced into a gendered situation, like a women's restroom, there is an assumption made by others that I am a specific gender not the one I identify as, thus I am **outing** myself whether I want to or not. A student of color in a classroom full of white students might be more aware of their race, especially if the instructor **tokenizes** the student by expecting them to speak for all people of color. Identity saliency is experienced through all identities; it also means that if, for example, I am in a space where almost everyone has the same faith as me that I do not have to be as conscious of my religious identity, even if I might be more aware of my romantic orientation, ability, or any other identity outside of my faith. Think of identity saliency as the flavor you taste most in a cake, or an ingredient like cinnamon that you can distinguish separately from the other ingredients, especially if you are caused to pay more attention to it and despite it being a part of the cake as a whole. So even though we are always all of our identities, there are situations where one of our identities is highlighted or brought to the forefront.

To complete this chapter, we are going to engage in an activity to explore how identities are constantly in play with one another, a theory known as **intersectionality** that is implied by the multiplicative approach which yields a cake instead of ingredients separated into bowls. Repeat after me, "I am a cake."

<u>List Your Ingredients Activity</u>

As an example I have filled out my identity ingredients in the left box beneath each category below, the empty boxes on the right side are for you to fill in..

Gender Identity

Genderqueer/Genderfxcked	

Age

25	

Race/Ethnicity

White	

Grade/Level of Education

Graduate School	

Do You Have Any Disabilities?

Yes	

Socio-Economic Class ($)

Working-Poor	

Sexual Orientation

It's Complicated	

Romantic Orientation

Questioning	

Religion/Faith

I believe in aspects of many religions	

Are You A Citizen? If Yes, By Birth or Naturalization?

Yes, I Am A Citizen By Birth	

What Language(s) Do you Speak?

English	

Marital Status?

Married, the Paperwork	

Follow Up Questions for List Your Ingredient Activity

Were there any identities that you had difficulty naming?

Was there an identity you inhabit that I failed to mention? Take some time to write below.

Identity Mapping: Creating Your "Cake" Recipe

This process is called identity mapping. You will want some coloring implements (i.e., different colored pens, crayons, markers), and you can use the template on the following page to develop your map or a separate paper/work space, even a computer. As an example, I have included my own identity map utilizing the identities I listed above after the directions for this exercise . Every person's identity map is different, and this is not about artistic talent as much as it is about beginning to look at the multiple ways identities interact with one another. Think of this as creating the

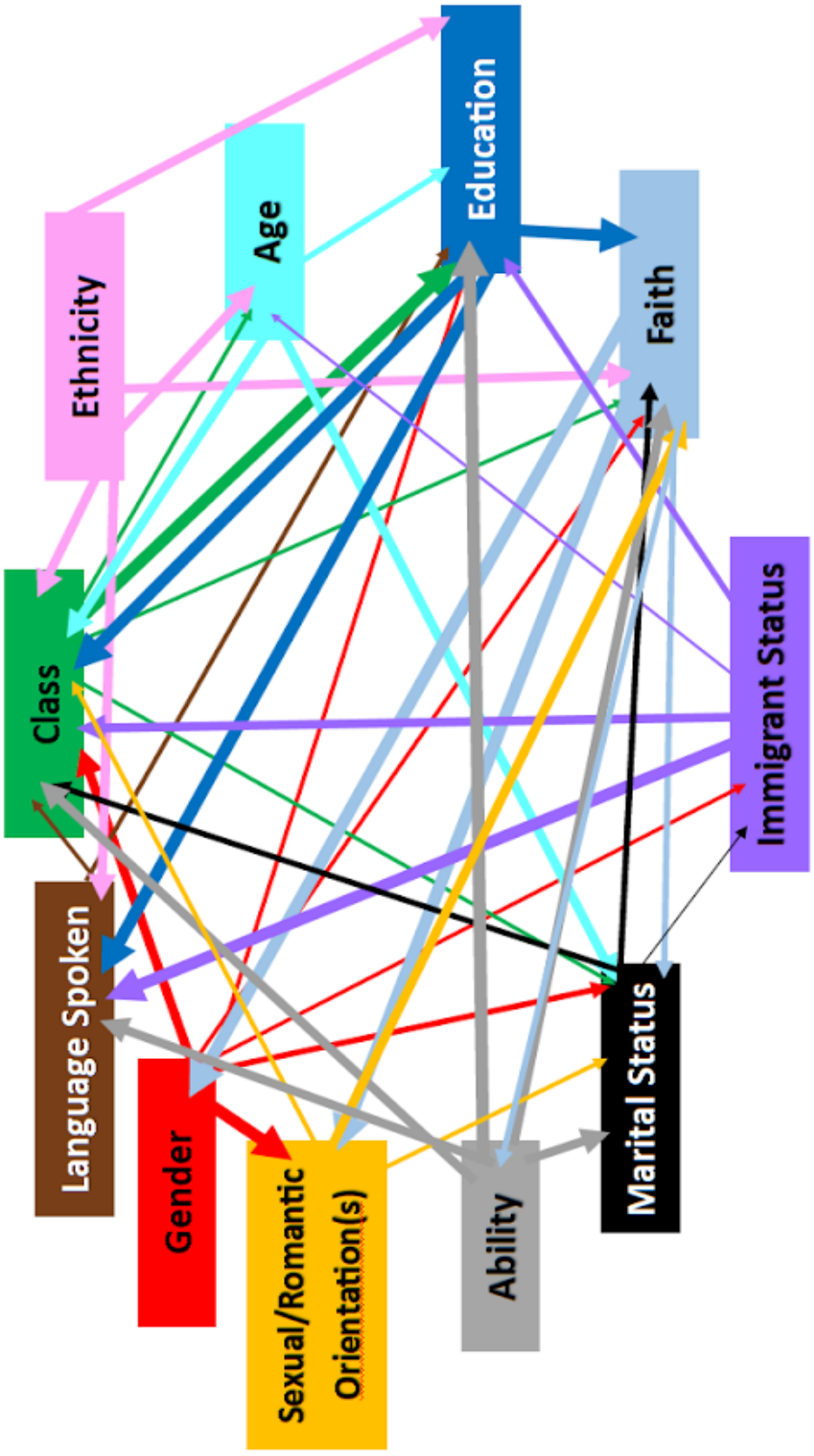
recipe for your cake, finding out how one ingredient interacts with the others. Some aspects are different, some are similar, and some interact more than others. The following instructions will walk you through the process.

1. Color code your identities and draw them as separate boxes on the page.
   - I have used: Gender, Class, Ethnicity, Education, Ability, Sexual/Romantic Orientation(s), Faith, Marital Status, Immigrant Status, Age, Language Spoken.
2. Beginning with any identity that you see fit, draw lines to other identities that interact with that one.
   - For example, my gender directly affects my Class, Education, Sexual/Romantic Orientation(s), Faith, Marital Status, Immigrant Status
   - The more this identity affects another identity bolden the line between them.
   - You will see that my gender strongly affects my sexual/romantic orientations and is the boldest line.
   - The thinnest gender line is to Education because where I am from those designated female at birth go to college at the same, or higher rates than those designated male at birth.
3. Repeat this process with the other identities. Draw lines to ALL boxes that are intersect/affect that identity using the color of that box, regardless if the two boxes have been connected before.
   - For example, my Faith is directly affected by my Gender, more so than my Gender is affected by my Faith. For this reason the light blue line from faith to gender is bolder than the red line between gender and faith. However my sexual/romantic orientations and my faith interact about equally so both lines will be the same boldness.

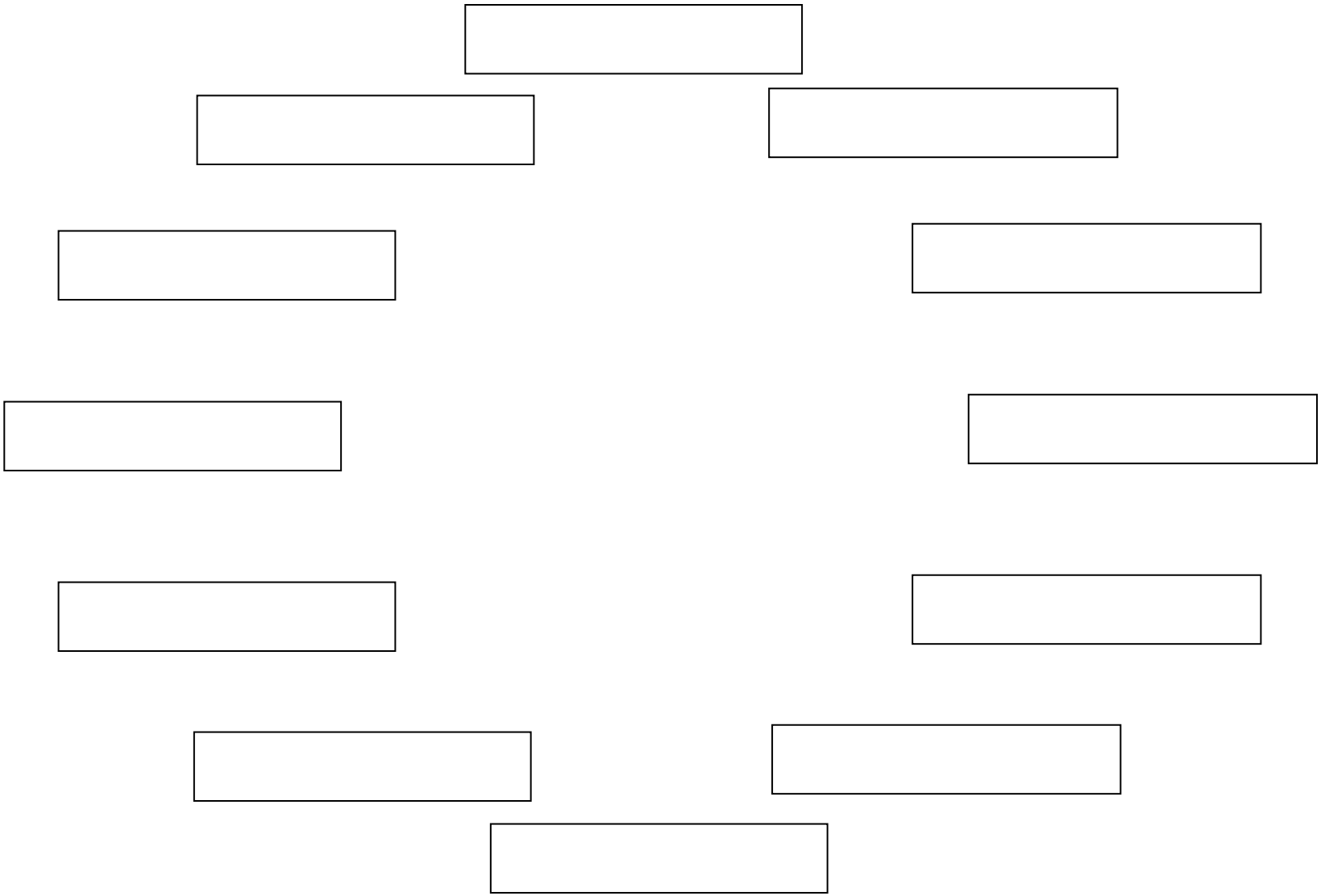
4. Once you have gone through all of the boxes look at the map in front of you. Reflect on the ways in which each identity interacts. Was there any intersection that particularly surprised you?
5. Keep this map handy throughout the rest of this workbook understanding that as you proceed, your map or your understanding of it, may change. This is completely normal. However, instead of changing this map, try making another one outside of the workbook so you can compare them later and, as always, reflect on the differences, similarities, or new information you've uncovered through this process.

Now it's your turn to map yourself! This process can take some time; don't rush it! The workbook will be here when you've completed the mapping process! If you feel as though one of the identity categories I included is not one you wish to include, leave it out. If I left something out that you think is important to include, add it in! This map is about you and learning more about your social location. I have drawn multiple boxes which you can label as you wish, if there are too many do not worry about filling them all.

Sample Map


Education
Age
Ethnicity
Faith
Class
Immigrant Status
Language Spoken
Gender
Sexual/Romantic Orientation(s)
Ability
Marital Status

Identity Map



Follow Up Questions for Identity Mapping Activity

What did you take away from completing this exercise?

While you completed your map did any of the interactions between identities, or "ingredients" surprise you? If yes, which and why?

Write below about any other feelings you have after completing the identity mapping activity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, you have worked through the concept of intersectionality by applying it to your life and thinking about how each aspect of your identity interacts with other aspects. In the next chapter, you will learn more about what your passions are and more about the work you could be doing to create change in your community.

CHAPTER 3

FINDING YOUR PASSION

Autoethnography: My Passion Was a Given

The story of my activism is not an amazing one—it honestly resembles that of many young queer folk who decide they need to create change because the way things are is just unsustainable. When my eighth-grade classmates discovered I might be queer, they made it known how unwelcome I was in our school. There was a time when I seriously wondered if I would be referred to as "dyke" until I graduated high school. I was trying to figure out my own identity, and outside of my first girlfriend and a small online community I did not know any other queer folk, and I definitely did not want to be *different.*

Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—my difference was not something I could choose to discard. It just was. I will not say everything changes in high school. However, I changed in high school, my friends changed, my perspective on my worth changed, and, in the ninth grade, these changes can make a huge difference. I had heard rumors of a senior student planning what is known as a *Day Of Silence*—a day when participants choose not to speak in order to represent the silenced voices of LGBTQ+ students, both living and those whose lives ended through bullycide. The idea that my school was willing to host this event and that a teacher was willing to sponsor it, provided some hope.

The rumor of the event was true, the staff member was kind and wanted to create change in our school—make it safer for LGBTQ+ students. At least fifteen students participated in the event, and no major acts of violence occurred in response to our

actions. The event was deemed a success. And yet, I could not let our actions end there. If students would come together and stop violence and harassment in our school, I had to believe that with some effort no one would have to be bullied for being Queer. Through that experience, I found my passion—if I could help one person not feel alone, make one would-be bully decide against violence, then I could make a difference. The Day Of Silence Advisor agreed.

We arranged for a school club to be formed, the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). At first the group consisted of two students and the advisor only. We met weekly, made posters, held another Day of Silence and slowly our group grew. Soon our membership grew from two to five, and we all attended a local conference for high school GSA's. The next year, five members transformed into eight and then to twelve. By my senior year of high school, we had eighteen documented student members dedicated to ending anti-LGBT harassment in our school.

After high school, I went to a local college, and I became involved in their Queer Straight Alliance (QSA). Through this organization I continued to work for the equitable treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals and groups. By my junior year at the university, I was president of the group and facilitated pride week, a successful Coming Out Day poster campaign, and was working in various classrooms, the campus Reading and Writing Center, and within the community both visiting the high school I had attended and one from the city next to ours. I made raising awareness a priority and was identified as a campus community leader by various groups at my university. This all stemmed from having a passion close to my heart. It was personal. I could not stand by while others were treated poorly for being something I was. I did my best to make what I was passionate about resonate with other people.

Working to Find Your Passion

Key Terms

- Identity Based Passion
- Circumstance Based Passion

This chapter is designed to help you figure out what work you are passionate about doing. As you have worked through the first two chapters, you may have already developed ideas about what your passions are. There are four reasons you might be passionate about a given issue or circumstance. First, you may have an **identity based passion**, meaning you are passionate about a subject because you inhabit an oppressed identity. In this case, you want to challenge the oppression and/or provide opportunities/resources to/for people of similar identities. An example of identity based passion is my work to develop a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) in high school.

My passion for this organization emerged as a response to the violence I faced before and after coming out as queer. Prior to coming out, my peers communicated their discomfort with the possibility that I might not be straight in extremely obvious ways. After coming out, the violence intensified, my queerness an apparent license for disrespect. An uptick in harassment, vandalism, bullying, physical threats and perpetrated acts of physical violence all urged me to stand up not only for myself but for others. In a particularly memorable conversation with my high school vice principal during my Junior year, she asked me why I had been wearing a rainbow flag as a cape every day for two months. On my way to the bus, I stopped to explain, “If I can help one person not have to experience the pain of being bullied, or let one person know they are not alone, then my cape, my actions, have made a difference.”

Second, you may have a **circumstance based passion** or a passion sparked by a specific set of circumstances which affect you, someone you know, or a community to

which you feel a connection. Circumstance based passion can be connected to the concept of **moral shock** as discussed by sociologist James Jasper. Moral shock is a cause for action, the circumstances of an event are so morally or emotionally shocking, surprising, disturbing even, that people are "driven to act even in the absence of organizations devoted to the cause" (Polletta 19).

Circumstance based passion can connect to a third reason why you may feel passionate about partaking in some form of activism or organizing--or sympathy based passion, also known as **allyship**. You feel compassion or sympathy for a group/individual/ circumstance because you identify as a friend and/or ally in the cause, but you have not experienced the issue personally or do not identify within a community yourself.

In the next chapter, I will go into more details about the examples I use below which relate to the historic flooding which took place in Louisiana in September of 2016; however, these examples work best to describe how I became passionate about an issue and used that passion to create and execute a plan. I would argue that it was a sense of moral shock at the lack of resources for flood survivors and a sincere sympathetic reaction

Key Terms

- Moral Shock
- Ally/ Allyship

Notes

which made my flood relief efforts in August of 2016 a success. The people of our hometown were shocked by the vastness of the flooding and the lack of response by most news outlets, in addition the people affected by the flood were people they knew.

As more information was found out about the status of homes, or pictures were sent to me, I could update donors about the needs arising in the flood zone. It is important to remember that all of this is pointless without the crowd to source from. Navigating social media platforms, from Twitter to Tumblr, and sharing with as many people as you can is imperative. Not everyone will be able to donate, some will simply leave words of encouragement. Others may have the ability to donate large sums of money, but it is what leads to donations that makes a difference in crowdsourcing. Every share makes a difference in the success of the campaign and after twenty-four hours our campaign had reached 96 shares, and over $1,200 to help with housing, vehicle replacement, food, furniture, vital document replacements, and even a toy or two for my niece.

Last, but not least, sometime you have a passion to create change or provide aid because you feel empathy. Your identification with a person and/or circumstance and

Notes

a separation from the person(s) and/or circumstance. You've been there and moved forward, now you want to help others do the same. This is **empathy based passion**, a passion that you have because you share a knowledge of the feeling and/or experience of the person(s) directly affected.

Key Terms

- Empathy Based Passion

The goal of this chapter is to identify the work you are passionate about. What irks you beyond measure that you can find the passion to organize around? In the space below list some issues that you feel are unjust, or something in your community which you feel a well-honed plan could help fix. For example, organizing a toiletry drive for a homeless shelter, or providing free sanitary napkins or tampons in your school bathroom. Right now, dream big.

Looking at the ideas you came up with above, choose one idea that really resonates with you. What means the most to you, and write below about why?

What type of passion do you think this is, in other words, why are you passionate about creating change or organizing around this issue?

While I have discussed allyship in previous chapters, it is important to address it again because many passions will likely involve allyship. If you are utilizing an intersectional approach your work and passions will involve allyship because you have to think outside of your won identities. In order to be an ally, you have to act as one and contrary to popular belief, you do not get to label yourself an ally to a group/cause. That might seem kind of harsh, but think of it this way: if I call myself an ally to people of color but do not interrupt acts of racism when I see them, am I an ally? If a person calls themself an ally without engaging in the acts that would make them an ally, and we continue to let them call themself an ally, we leave room for a lot of allies to do nothing and still get credit for being an ally. Being called an ally is not as important as being an ally. Being an ally is about consistently taking action, not for credit or to be seen

Activist Profile

Alaina Leary, 24, is a disabled writer and editor who uses these roles to discuss matters of representation and social issues relating to disability, sexual assault and other traumas, as well as LGBTQ+ issues through personal storytelling. Leary has been published by *Teen Vogue*, *Everyday Feminism*, and *Rooted in Rights,* among others. Utilizing her passion for writing and editing, Leary contributes much needed content to representation of disabled and queer authors, with an intersectional lens which admits privilege and seeks change. If your passion is writing, you may consider utilizing it to raise awareness and create change as Alaina Leary does.

doing so, but because you know something is unjust and want to correct it because marginalized groups should not be treated unjustly simply because they are marginalized.

Notes

In a similar manner any organizing that you partake in as an ally should be lead by individuals directly affected by the issue at hand. For example, my high school allies, the "S" in the GSA, listened to me when I did not want them to fight the people harassing me but instead utilize peaceful methods of dealing with other people's dislike of my being queer. Believe it or not, I also got the chance to serve as an ally in the GSA also. As the group grew, our meetings changed as new people came in and our needs progressed. Leaders in the group began practicing using different kinds of gender neutral pronouns and incorporating lessons into our meetings. We also, knowingly or not, worked to deal with class differences as people who had transportation would give rides to others who lived too far to avoid missing the bus. Allyship is also being prepared to examine your leadership and organizations intersectionally to make sure they are accessible to those who need the work you might be doing.

If your work is centered around an identity you do not inhabit or a circumstance you are not in, write below who you can talk to that is a directly affected individual?

Why have you chosen that person? If you cannot think of someone directly look into learning more about the issue and if any work is already being done. Remember that it is not that person's job to educate you; do some basic research first. The internet is your friend.

Key Terms

- Elevator Pitch

Your passion to create change and organize for a difference is important, and you will need to understand why you have chosen this topic as your focus area. **Elevator pitches** are short, sweet and to the point; they help narrow down your message and goals while also providing an easy, pre-planned speech for when you are asked about your work or are soliciting donations. In a way, I used an elevator pitch to solicit donations for my mom and brother by asking people to recall my family's involvement with the city and generosity including public service with the local police department and national guard. While this work was primarily written it could easily have been

vocalized had I been organizing in person. In the space below, develop an elevator speech, or a couple of sentences that add up to less than a minute of normal-paced talking which explains why you are passionate about the topic and why others also should be.

Conclusion

Knowing why you are passionate about an issue and being able to tell others why an issue is important for them to take action on becomes part of the next chapter: Creating a Plan. Continue reading to find out how being passionate about your work and helping others become passionate about your efforts assists in creating plans that make change.

CHAPTER 4

CREATING A PLAN

Autoethnography: Flood Relief

Maybe you never thought you'd have to organize your community. Perhaps nothing bad, or tragic, or injust has ever happened to you or those you love. It is important to remember that anything can happen and if you are not willing to help others how can you expect others to help you? Protestant pastor Martin Niemoller said the following:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Niemoller reference refers to World War Two, reflecting on the violence of doing nothing, the dangers of ignoring injustice or tragedy as you witness it. On Sunday, August 14, 2016 my family in Louisiana, like thousands of others, lost everything due to historic flooding. Colorlines.com cited 100,000 homes as damaged or destroyed. The Weather Channel website cited that "more than 4 trillion gallons of water" fell over southern Louisiana an amount that "can fill over 6 million Olympic-sized swimming pools." By Tuesday my oldest brother's home was invisible below the water. My mother's home which, according to her landlord, had not flooded in over one hundred

years began to fill with the murky waters of overfull bayous and sewage systems. Everyone was safe; no one we knew was hurt. But with the exception of one person, no one in our family had anything left.

Figure 3: Image of white male in camouflage hat, dark glasses, grey t-shirt with image, wading through brown water during historic Louisiana flooding 2016.

As my brothers waded through waist deep water full of dangerous bacteria, human waste and years of decaying nature, they pulled two kayaks hoping to rescue those who needed it, both human and animal alike. They became two unofficial members of the Cajun navy. Ordinary citizens, with various types of watercraft, organizing to save lives.

Over a thousand miles away, my heart hurt for my family. What did I know about losing everything except that it was unimaginable? I feared for their homes, their lives, their futures, but what could I do? I waited for my brothers, who were just building their lives as adults, one of whom had nothing left, to call. Their community in Sorrento, Louisiana was stripped bare except for the clothes on their backs. I asked what I could do and, at first, they did not know, but as the tragedy continued to unfold they put forth two requests. The first was to set up a crowdfunding

Figure 4: Image of flooded street shallowing to dry land, center lines visible beneath brown water.

account in my brother Nick's and my mom's names. Second I was asked to organize a flood relief donation drive back home in Massachusetts from where I currently lived in Iowa. So from over a thousand miles away from both locations I began to organize family, friends, acquaintances and even strangers.

With this crowd sourcing campaign, we targeted our hometown, citing Nick's military service and my mom's history of volunteering in public schools and sports, along with her twenty years of service as an emergency dispatcher. We used pictures to remind people of the person behind the name, behind the request for aid. We reminded people in our hometown in Western, MA that this event did affect people they had known for years, locals. Soon, people we had not heard from in years began to donate funds to our cause ranging from five dollars to four hundred.

The second action that needed to be taken was soliciting relief items from our community in Massachusetts. A call for clothes of all sizes but in good condition, bedding, shoes, cleaning supplies, small toys or stuffed animals, coloring books, school supplies, toiletries, cookware and dishes, canned food, and backpacks went out via a Facebook event page. We shared this page in various community forums and on the pages of local groups that knew my mom and brothers well. My dad had suggested the idea after Nick told him nothing was left for the majority of Louisiana residents, and when he said he'd drive from Massachusetts to Louisiana in two weekends I knew time was short. With my aunt agreeing to run things on the ground, working the Facebook page from Iowa was easier. I sent emails, shared messages and images, sent personal requests to those I knew for their assistance, looking for both donations and drop off sites because we needed a secure public place with set hours to collect what was given.

When looking for places where people could drop off their donations a logical

space seemed to be the largest organization in town, the local college that I had graduated from two years previously. I contacted Westfield State University explaining that my mom and brother had lost everything, and we had a goal to help as many residents of the flooded state as we could. I requested a drop off site and, if possible, a campus-wide email requesting donations and aid. Then I waited. Without this donation site we were at square one for donating items. If they could not be dropped off how could we collect?

Figure 5: Donated items in blue and black bags on the floor of an office.

Fortunately, in my undergraduate career, I made a lot of acquaintances and friends among university faculty, staff, and administration. The TRiO Student Support Services program director responded to my email saying "Naturally, TRiO will serve as a donation collection site." While I do not think any of us realized what we had gotten into organizing this event, this was a break our Flood Relief Campaign needed. A campus wide email sharing my family's story and reminding people of my connection to the campus was sent to the faculty/staff email list. On Monday morning before even getting out of bed, I received a text with an image of a half dozen trash bags full of donated items. The contributions covered the floor of the TRiO office. The text also reported they might need a pick up because in just a few short hours of collecting their office was quickly filling with promises of more donations to come.

The WSU collection site was the first of many, as my aunt solicited donations from work, local businesses, and a local church. There were over a dozen trips made to collect donated items and bring them to my father whose company had offered a twenty-

foot trailer to transport the items. We did not have a distribution plan, but on Wednesday, August 31, 2016, my father left Massachusetts with an overloaded trailer, and the back of his pick up full of donations both specified for my family and for general aid to the public. The next day I left Iowa by car to meet everyone at my brother Ben's home which was minimally affected by the flood. By Saturday morning, through collective brainstorming, we developed a plan for distribution. In exchange for help in organizing the goods, and finding places for clothing which continued to be donated despite that need having been fulfilled, the Sorrento Volunteer Fire Department in Sorrento, Louisiana agreed to accept our donations and distribute them to the local community.

Figure 6: Donations in white bags as seen from side of trailer during unloading.

In a three hour timespan, a chain of nine people unloaded the truck and trailer into two large shipment containers and one bay of the Fire Department garage. As I documented the unloading in images and film, we learned that politically powerful and governmental relief agencies had not come through for people. They offered little aid compared to what private groups like ours had organized. The fire department had filled and distributed two large shipping containers four times by the time we had arrived.

After the unloading was done we spent a little bit of family time together. My niece turned six that Sunday amidst debris piled 10 feet high in front of homes destroyed, many to never be rebuilt, and not covered by flood insurance, owners

unaided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Ultimately we collected more than $2,500 for my mother and brother, distributed the content of a twenty-foot trailer full of people's hand-me-downs and items newly purchased or never used. At seven months after the flooding my mother remains homeless, my oldest brother whose home was destroyed salvaged nothing but metal tools and rehomed his family to another state where they work to rebuild their lives. Many schools throughout Louisiana are still closed, students from flooded districts utilize the buildings of other districts for four hours a day, and those districts send their students for the second half of the day.

Notes

Working Through Creating a Plan

In this chapter, you will learn some of the ways you can create a plan of action for community organizing or social change. Specifically, I focus on the implementation of time, manner of creating change, (primarily non-violence/peaceful minded), and method of creating change--direct action, service, etc. In this chapter, I also focus on how to identify appropriate options for the work you want to do. First, we will walk through some types of organizing and examine successful

movements/campaigns which used these methods. Then, you will complete an exercise on root causes for situations of injustice, followed by ways to identify the type(s) of action that may help you in your cause. Finally, this chapter offers general planning guidelines, and suggests some methods of organizing, including how to get information to those you manage.

The goal of this section of the workbook is to give you a jumping off point for your work and some guidelines on moving forward which you can craft to fulfill your own needs. Keep in mind your role in the movement and, if you are acting as an ally, your job is to support those creating change. While allyship can make creating social change easier, you should step aside to let those directly affected come forth as leaders of their movement.

Organizing

In creating a plan, it is important to ask who? what? how? where? when? and why? The previous chapter of this workbook explored the topic of finding your passion and should help you answer the question why. Other questions to consider are: Who are you seeking to organize? What change are you seeking to make? How, or what method, do you plan to use to create

Activist Profile

Filsan Hussein, 20, is an activist because she doesn't have a choice but to be one. She says "I wake up everyday in my brown skin and that is an act of resistance in itself." According to Hussein when she does something revolutionary, she does it not for herself but for the other black and brown folk who wake up hating the skin they are in, and "for those who start to hate their religion because society tells them to". For Hussein, being an activist is taking the blows of today so that one day "another little revolutionary Muslim girl can come along and have the way paved for her without dealing with factors like bullying and death threats." Hussein is a Senior at Westfield State University in Massachusetts.

change? Where are you focusing your efforts? Locally? Nationally? When do you want to start organizing and when are you hosting your rally/protest/event?

Key Terms

- Civil Disobedience
- Slacktivism

Notes

As this chapter progresses, you will find that I do not focus much on the act of **civil disobedience**, or knowingly and intentionally breaking the law in the name of raising awareness about the unjustness of the law itself or its application. Although I believe civil disobedience is a necessary tool used by activists in many settings, it is my goal to encourage you to exhaust all other reasonable and legal options prior to resorting to civil disobedience.

Many young organizers begin by taking small steps toward creating change and getting involved, though your methods will depend on the situation(s) and/or institutions being challenged. Perhaps you partake in **slacktivism** or an oversimplified, often technology based, method of engaging in activist work. Slacktivists use "likes" and "shares" on social media to propagate a specific message. Prime examples of slacktivism can be found during the 2016 No DAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline) protests. Those in support of the Water Protectors would share the group's posts, or at one point "check in" at Standing Rock on social media in hopes to confuse police and government officials as to how many people were partaking in the protests.

As it turns out, "checking in" did not benefit the Water Protector's movement much besides showing the level of support they had in the world. It did, however, give way to conversations about going a step farther to providing actual assistance as allies. Various letters, editorials, blog and social media posts articulated how "checking in" did not provide assistance besides increasing media attention and visibility of the protests. There was no proof that the police were monitoring the check ins, and a Facebook post by the Morton County Sheriff's department denied monitoring social media for these reasons. Standing Rock leaders took the opportunity to encourage people to take action by donating money, goods, or time to the cause and/or to continue to more intentionally signal boost the Water Protectors' cause.

Signal boosting is what happens when individuals, especially allies, share the message of protesters/change agents through social media or news media in order to promote the actions of activists and raise awareness for the issues being addressed. To signal boost one can use a hashtag affiliated with a movement, link to sources directly run by organizers, provide air time on television, radio, internet video shows or podcasts, and in general boost, or share the message that has been

Key Terms

- Signal Boosting

Notes

articulated by directly affected individuals/groups.

Key Terms

- Passing the Mic
- Hashtagging

Another form of signal boosting is generally referred to as **passing the mic**. As an ally this might involve speaking on an issue you have been invited to, offering your time to organizers of the movements you seek to support, or, at the very least, conferring with these organizers to find out how you can best convey their message. Signal boosting and passing the mic are methods by which you can become an active ally. Next, I offer some ways that you can use slacktivism, or a more active form of digital activism to engage an issue that you are organizing around.

Hashtagging is one of these methods. If you post about an issue, create a unique but easy to use hashtag that relates to it. Encourage other folks affiliated with your campaign to adopt the hashtag whenever writing on social media about the issue. Remember, some social media platforms, like Twitter, have limited characters available and you want your hashtag to be able to be used on as many platforms as possible. Some hashtags for social change that have been popular in 2017 are #Daywithoutimmigrants, #deleteuber, and #womensmarch.

Each of these get to the point rather quickly. #Daywithoutimmigrants refers to the United States immigrant strike which sought to display the value of the work completed by immigrants everyday in the U.S. #DeleteUber was used as a boycott strategy calling on individuals who support immigrants and refugees in the U.S. to delete the ride sharing application Uber whose drivers effectively acted as strike-breakers when New York City cabbies refused to pick up passengers at Kennedy Airport as an act of protest against President Donald Trump's immigration ban. Finally the #womensmarch refers to the peaceful Women's March on Washington which occurred

on January 21, 2017 and which called on the new federal administration to recognize women's rights as human rights. In the case of #womensmarch the event was centralized in Washington D.C., but satellite protests around the world utilized the hashtag to symbolize solidarity.

In the space below think of some catchy hashtags that get your message or need across quickly and effectively. Remember that this hashtag should be creative and as unique as possible, I recommend searching the hashtag on social media, spelled exactly as you plan to use it, in order to see if anyone else has already put your wording to use.

You can also use social media to organize followers for direct action. The hashtag mentioned above which targeted Uber served as a call to action. Deleting the application showed that the hashtag users disapproved of Uber's action to profit from the cabbie strike they

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would be breaking by continuing to pick up fares to and from the JFK airport (Isaac). In a similar manner, you can utilize social media and hashtags to raise awareness for an event and organize individuals to show up for direct action protests like the Women's March or events like town hall meetings or fundraisers and donation drives.

Social media enables organizers to arrange more people quickly with events, groups, or pages acting as a method of wrangling the troops and spreading the word. As explained in the autoethnography of this chapter, when organizing donations for flood relief following the August 2016 flooding in Louisiana, I facilitated the collections through social media. Mostly I utilized Facebook as a means to solicit donations of specific goods which would be delivered to people in Louisiana in need of clothing, toiletries, food, and any other items needed for everyday use. By networking through multiple community pages for my hometown we were able attract news coverage. Between social media and the news, we were able to organize and deliver a twenty-foot trailer full of supplies to Louisiana within three weeks of the historic flooding.

Another way social media events, particularly on Facebook, have been used to gather crowds has been in local protests. For the last several years, Facebook events

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Key Terms

- Direct Action
- Individual Direct Action
- Collective Direct Action

Notes

have been able to spread word quickly by allowing individuals to invite others who can indicate if they are attending, might attend, or will not be attending an event. This allows for organizers to plan for marching permits, address any safety concerns, and even for knowing whether or not to get a bullhorn or other audio equipment. Although the publicity of these events may invite counter protests, it is important to note that counter protests, while frustrating, are other people exercising the same rights you are, and that those people see you, your protest, and your cause as a threat to theirs.

If you are organizing in-person events, whether donation drives or protests, these are forms of **direct action** or actions through which activists engage directly with the issues they are organizing around. These methods, which can encompass others, lead to social change. While no single method of direct action is the *only* way to create change, I do believe that varying forms of direct action are the most effective at creating change.

Direct action initiatives can be organized in two forms, individual or collective. **Individual direct actions** are undertaken by a single person and may include solo-protests such as sit-ins or protest art or may feature a form of craftivism**,** like yarn-bombing or graffiti. The other way direct action might be completed is **collectively** or with a group, this includes marches, rallies, sit-ins and similar acts which have a bigger impact when completed with multiple people, especially *en masse.*

Craftivism is the act of utilizing a craft or art form to create change or make activist related statements. Yarn-bombing as activism, for example, utilizes knitting or crocheting in public spaces to create statements about issues like homelessness and climate change. While not necessarily a consistently legal practice, yarn bombing is not as frequently prosecuted as graffiti because it does not typically cause permanent damage. There is also an understanding that yarn-bombing is often affiliated with white women, a demographic which does not face as much policing as other demographics who might contribute to other types of illicit crafitivism.

Key Terms

- Craftivism

Art as activism plays a significant role in creating change. The Guerrilla Girls are artists who utilize art to protest double standards in the art industry for example, why there are so many images of naked women in art museums but so few pieces created by women. They utilize billboards, postcards, and other forms of art as a means of protest to call attention to double standards in the art world and have created shows entirely around the lack of representation of women artists in museums.

Not all protests focus on the use of art to create change, but all protest is art. It is choreographed, planned, and detailed to have the most effect possible. As you create your plan you might consider the art of protest as a way to gain momentum, show solidarity, and/or to make a statement. In October of 2013, I was a student at a university which had a president embroiled in controversy and accused of both stealing money and making disparaging comments about students of color who were from lower income communities. We did not take kindly to his offenses and decided that when the board of trustees met to decide the university president's punishments, we would show up to voice our opinions. As part of a coordinated effort among students we arranged

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for nearly twenty-five students to show up, wearing one color, red, to show our disapproval with signs and statements to the press.

While we faced challenges like the room being too full according to fire code and many of us being forced to wait in the hallways, we maintained our position. Individuals who had made it to the meeting early texted those of us waiting in the hall. The board decided to meet privately to discuss the president's actions, and many expected students to disperse at that point. Instead we waited in the building lobby where the press approached students for statements. As a rule we had determined that any student giving a statement to the press about the effects of the president's actions on us, or his statements about us, would be backed by other students in red to show our solidarity. As a delayed measure we arranged to get copies of two handwritten signs made for the student protesters. One read "Don't Reward Greed" and the other read "Throwaway Kids Fight Back." When it came to organizing this protest we had limited time between the notification of the board meeting and it's occurrence which meant less time to plan our protest and how we would engage with others in attendance.

Figure 7: Students and others seen speaking with media.

Time is essential in the world of protest. Organizing promptly around an event or issue aids in momentum. Planning protests on important dates, during popular events, or events when major decisions are being made by people in power. If you are organizing a sit-in or taking over of a space you need to recognize that timing is not necessarily able to be planned. Students at the protest at my university sat for thirteen hours waiting for a decision that came sometime around one-am. We arranged for food to be delivered and the facility had public bathrooms and water fountains available, but these are not guaranteed during protest. We were able to sit through that time, some coming and going for classes; meanwhile, the buildings timers shut off the lights around eleven PM leaving us to do homework and converse by the light of cellphones and laptops.

When organizing a protest rally time may need to be strictly budgeted planned down to the minute for speakers, or it may be a lot looser, taking as long as it takes for a board of directors, or legislators or politicians, or anyone with power to make a decision. The Dream Defenders in Florida, for example, decided to battle Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law which permitted, borderline legalized, George Zimmerman's killing of

Notes

Trayvon Martin by holding a 31 day, 30 night sit in at the Florida Statehouse in Tallahassee Florida.

In addition to time to organize and enact social change, money can often be a major factor. Whether organizers need funds to pay their bills while they devote all efforts to change, or if the organizing is about raising funds for a party in need, or even if funds are needed to facilitate a march, rally, protest, or raising funds for a speaker or travel for people to lobby at the state or national capital, money plays a role in creating change. There are several methods to raising funds. Below, I will concentrate on two methods of crowd sourcing which are common in community efforts.

Fundraising and Crowdsourcing

The first method of fundraising which grows more and more common with the digital age is crowdsourcing funds through the internet. Crowdsourcing websites provide the opportunity to raise funds in the form of monetary gifts which mostly remain nontaxable, but fundraising through this method can create difficulties. Finding out what to set your goal at can be difficult, and some sites do not allow you to surpass your goals. Also, because there are people who prey on disasters like the flood in Louisiana that I wrote about in the beginning of this chapter, there may be some added processes to verify your cause. However, almost anyone over eighteen can set up a fundraiser, but the most successful fundraisers are planned and managed strategically.

Successful crowdsourcing campaigns must specify what the funds will be used for and by whom, and typically require set monetary goals, which, if surpassed, you should inform patrons of your plans for the funds. If you are considering crowdsourcing as an individual or as a group networking is key but so is creating a compelling story that people connect with on some level. *Think of the issue that you are passionate about*

and write below about why it matters to you and why it should matter to other people enough that they would donate actual money to your cause. Write your thoughts in the space below. Think of this as an extension of the elevator speech you wrote earlier in the workbook. This could also serve as the start of a media release explaining your work and information others would need to participate alongside you.

I strongly suggest being honest and open about your fundraising efforts, from why you are using a specific crowdsourcing page to what the monies will go to support. I also recommended offering information about what will happen to funds surpassing the goal, or extra funds. If you are organizing on behalf of an organization or a program that will be ongoing, consider providing a budget for those donating to your cause, especially if you would like to see repeat donations made. For example, the crowdsourcing page I began for my mother and brother is still up at this time, though dormant. We decided that any fund which exceeded our goals would be donated to helping other flood victims.

The second, and more old-fashioned, method of crowdsourcing is collection jars or buckets in public spaces. These require making a connection to the space and the people inside. For example, during the flood relief efforts we put both donation collection boxes and donation jars for spare change at various stores in our hometown,

especially those where my mother or brothers frequented or worked at prior to moving to Louisiana. These jars did not raise as much as the crowdsourcing site did, however, they did raise something. If you are organizing a fundraiser for someone whose home was destroyed in some way, or to raise money for a school trip, or to support someone with a terminal illness, these are small but valuable donations. Even larger organizations like LGBTQ+ Pride organizers still utilize this method at events to raise funds.

Key Terms

- Neoliberal Capitalism

Make the donation containers bright, have easily read text which explains what the funds are for, and include that hashtag you created or a way to find out more information on the container. When possible have someone holding the bucket who is able to answer questions and share reasons why a spontaneous cash donation is valuable. Getting personal with community organizing and crowdsourcing never hurts.

If you choose to crowdsource it is important to recognize that having to do so for disaster relief or to provide for the basic needs of your family and/or community, reflects on the **neoliberal capitalist** state of our economy in which government subsidies or support is limited and the economy is privatized, or in the hands of everyday citizens rather than political officials (Investopedia). While in some cases of extreme emergency and disaster the government provides assistance, that assistance is always secondary to private insurance and aid.

Conclusion

In this chapter you have learned about some of the different types of organizing and ways to create change. There are many other methods which you can choose to work with to create change in your community, and I suggest doing more research online to find a path that is right for you and your community. Remember that the same

method does not work in every situation and you need to be confident that you and any co-organizers can create change using the methods you choose.

In the next chapter, you will learn about different methods of documenting change. The method of change or organizing you choose to use, or the event you choose to hold, changes the type of documentation that you will use. Documenting change is a way to show what you organized and prove it made a difference, however big or small.

CHAPTER 5

DOCUMENTING CHANGE: PROVE IT HAPPENED, PROVE IT MATTERED

Autoethnography: An Example

Throughout this text I have shared narratives about my experiences creating change in, and with, my communities. There are various written examples of change and some images have been provided to show parts of the process in making a difference for yourself and for others. Hence, this autoethnography is found in the entirety of the text, including sharing what I have learned along with sharing the documentation itself.

In the rest of this chapter, I provide suggestions for how to document the work you and your community does, or will do. Included are some of my personal examples as an organizer, attendee, and photographer. I also provide some tools which may help and some opportunities to practice methods of documenting, or preparing to document, change.

Working Through Documenting Change

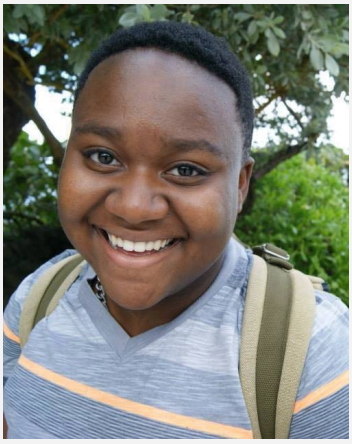
I would not have been able to write any of the narratives I did throughout this text had I not documented, in some way, my efforts as they were happening. I use journals, social media histories, and scrapbooks to help record my experiences with social activism. In this chapter, you will find information on documenting events and utilizing social media to share your message and impacts of the work you do. From capturing the events you hold in images and videos, to the media you facilitate by communicating with the news (television, radio, newspapers, internet) and social media, this chapter is about recognizing the difference you want to make as important and

documenting the efforts of you and your fellow activists make to create that change.

As a photographer, much of my activist work involved documenting events which I have organized and those organized by others to whom I offered my services and time. The events I have documented in photographic forms include sit-ins, teach-ins, marches, rallies, fundraisers, and conferences, all for various causes. Primarily documenting events as a photographer is where my experience lies. However, in organizing events I have also written reports and reflections about the work I have engaged. In addition, I have written responses to other people's organizing and read feedback about my own events and protests through both official channels like the local news stations, and unofficial channels like word of mouth and reactions posted via social media. I have also utilized and managed social and news media to document the social justice organizing and happenings in my community.

For example, during the protests against the president of my undergraduate college, we prepared statements to help establish a unified front, as news media covered the story. We let media outlets tell the world why we were angry and then signal boosted the work on social

Activist Profile



Ki'tay Davidson was a young, disabled, African-American, transgender man whose work sought to connect various social justice movements together, including but not limited to disability rights, queer rights, and communities of color, in an intersectional approach to create change. Recognized as a "Champion of Change" by the White House in 2013, Davidson's work stemmed from personal experiences and wanting to make the world a better place. He is known for working from love because in his words, "Love Wins."

In December 2015, Davidson died at 25 years old, his legacy of intersectional work regarding disability rights continues. For more information on Ki'tay Davidson's legacy follow @dissolidarity, and #DisabilitySolidarity, a hashtag started by Davidson, on Twitter.

media platforms by sharing links, in addition to our own posts and photos of the event. Similarly, during flood relief efforts, my family facilitated interviews with the news media to get word out about our efforts. We needed our story to exceed the work we had done on Faceboook. This brought more attention to the devastation in Louisiana, a story that was overshadowed by the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil. We then utilized the videos and interviews made by media outlets to boost our social media presence. By sharing the videos they created in addition to our own photos, videos, and written accounts, we reflected the collective actions of our community. We also used these images to say thank you and update people about the state of the Louisiana and what was happening with our family members.

The documentation of events serves several purposes. It helps record a history from the perspective of everyday organizers. The perspectives of grassroot organizers are rarely recorded nor are they the stories history books tell. Through documentation, we paint the picture of ourselves as we determined it to be. For example, protesters are often depicted as disrespectful nuisances, just as we were as sit-inners against the University president. The images that we preserved were

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of peaceful protestors who respected the rules set before us while still making our point. We showed our dislike for the president and his actions while studying in the lobby and engaging in respectful discourse with both the news media and those who believed our efforts were misguided. This is not to say that peaceful protest is the only method of expressing dissent. Many necessary social and political changes would not have been possible without violence, the United States Civil War and even World War II serve as examples of times when violence was used to change practices. You can learn more about those methods in other texts such as: Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, or in reflections of the aforementioned wars. The focus of this workbook is on peaceful protest.

Ways to Document: A Checklist

Method of Collection	**Type of documentation**	**Specific Items**	
	Written		
	Goals:	what were your goals?	
		were your goals met?	
		If yes, show evidence.	
		If no, discuss why	
		Did they change?	
		Did you exceed goals?	
Use Surveys!	Quantitative Feedback	How many people were involved?	
		What types of people were involved?	
		Time/Duration	
		Other Numbers	
Use Surveys!	Qualitative Feedback	What did people like?	
		What did people not like?	
		Did anyone express a specific emotion? If yes, what?	
	Visual		
	Photograhs	speakers	
		posters	

Method of Collection	Type of documentation	Specific Items	
	Visual continued		
	Photographs cont.	marchers/attendees/protestors	
		location	
		visual displays of emotion	
		workers	
	Video	speakers	
		posters	
		marchers/attendees/protestors	
		location	
		visual displays of emotion	
		workers	
	Audio	chants	
		speakers	
	News Media		
		Save all media coverage, the positive and the negative	
		scan clippings from newspapers in addition to keeping paper copies make sure to correctly source the article.	
		save links to videos (if news puts them online)	

Above is a checklist of things you would want to document about your movement, action, or event. It's split up into categories with specifics in each. When you are recording the work you do nothing is too big and, for the most part, nothing is too small to document as part of your event. You will want to document both qualitative information or that which may change depending on the individuals providing it and quantitative information such as numbers of people in attendance, amount of money raised or donations collected. The following list includes some options you have for collecting these two types of information. Remember that this entire workbook will also aid you in documenting the planning of your work. Much of this workbook can also be used as documentation of your process, goals and efforts. If you need to, repeat the

exercises from this book elsewhere to document your processes.

Figure 8: Speaker at *NoHo Stomp & Holler* 10/11/11

Photographing Events and Protests

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I am an event photographer, and in many ways photography is my contribution to conversations and education about issues of social justice. In the checklist included is a section on visual documentation of events. Both the photographic and video sections of this list focus on five focuses to capture, and these are based on what I try to focus on as an event photographer, and also what I have seen other people focus on in their documentation of work being done and events being held.

First, always try to document visually the person or persons speaking at your event with their permission to do so. For example some artists/performers have copyrights on their work prohibiting documenting their presence through video/audio means. Some speakers might ask that flash photography not be used or have other limitations to what they are willing to have recorded. If the event is "private" you may also consider asking attendees not to photograph or record the event to respect speakers wishes. That being said, public events, especially those held in public venues where there is a

*Figure 9,*Students at the University of Northern Iowa *Take Back the Night* 2017 event. The sign reads "bystander intervention."

reasonable expectation of being photographed, videotaped or documented, it is open to all people. This is something to discuss with speakers beforehand, especially if you want to take photos/video for public use to document your event. For an example of a photograph of a speaker at an event see *Figure 8.*

Figure 10, demonstrator at "NoHo Stomp & Holler" 10/11/11 holds a sign which reads, "The Victim Is Never to Blame. End Rape Culture. Yes=Yes & No=No."

You'll want to take pictures of attendees to document the size or diversity of the crowd. This is helpful to backup quantitative data where you can document the numbers of people visually as well as by counting. The crowd is also a source of visual displays of emotion. If you're wielding the camera look for people that embody your message, or who are carrying particularly powerful signs. For examples of photos which show attendees and their signs see *Figure 9* and *Figure 10.*

If anyone prominent in the community such as elected officials, come to your event, make sure you document that. Their presence may not be to support your work, but it almost definitely shows they think it is an important subject politically at the time. In addition, you might want to get posed shots of organizers, attendees, and special guests/speakers. These make great social media material, especially if your speakers/ special guests are willing to take pictures with attendees.

I do recommend a social media statement that asks people to only "tag" themselves and not others as a way of respecting people's privacy. I remember a time

where I did not want to be tagged in an image until I had seen it, and at some events, while I was proud to participate I didn't want my name associated for my own well being. This protects your group but also your attendees' privacy.

Make sure to document the space you use before you use it, after you set up and once you tear down. This shows the work you do but also serves as an insurance policy if anyone tries to say you did something you did not at the location like cause damages. It also serves to record the size of space you thought you'd need and can be a reminder for future planning on whether you need a bigger or smaller space the next time you have an event. It may also show the ways that space worked for your event needs in terms of space and set up. Were there not enough chairs? Did you exceeded the fire code? Was it accessible or not? These will be documented in other ways, too, but it helps to have them visually so you can facilitate the next space more easily.

Document visual displays of emotion regardless of what the emotion is. It may feel like an invasion of a person's space but you don't have to use the image if you decide it is too emotional or not representative for the emotional charge the event ends up taking. Displays of

Figure 11, Sexual Assault Advocate at the University of Northern Iowa *Take Back the Night* 2017 event realizes they failed to ask for consent in an educational activity by student organizers.

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emotion are beneficial in eliciting other people's emotions when seeking support for your cause or raising awareness about the next event on the schedule. Sometimes the pictures may show a sense of apathy to the issue and maybe that will tell organizers after the fact that they need to change their call to action to elicit emotional responses. And sometimes, a photo ends up becoming the image representative of your work.

Images of the event, the people, the signs they carry, are the messages outsiders are seeing about your event. Images in which signs are legible add a component of context to the event images as a whole. The words then convey the emotions the faces of people might not. Be sure to document the process of creating an event, show the setup and teardown, show workers or volunteers in action, and the efforts they are making. This facilitates future conversations about your plans but also provides an opportunity to recognize the people doing the background work so others can have a positive experience.

Journal/Reflect

I encourage you to reflect on the events as soon as you can after they happen. Do not edit the writing just think about what the event made you feel, and think. When you have recovered from the happenings take time to review these reflections to see how you feel after the fact and if your reflections may lead to change how you organize future events. Ask those who volunteer for these reflections too because maybe as a primary organizer tasks that you delegated made things more difficult for other people or maybe someone didn't feel they were able to contribute their best efforts because they were assigned to something that didn't suit their skills and/or passions.

Surveys

In the list of documentation methods I strongly suggest surveys as a way to

Key Terms

- Qualitative Data

collect data and feedback about your event. There are a few options on how to do surveys and different ways to deliver those. Not all events/actions will work in a way that make surveys the best method to use but if the event is going to be repeated, if you have organized a conference or workshop getting feedback on the organization, content, and delivery of content can be extremely helpful in planning future events. When you do these surveys have a way to enter the data for all organizers of the event to have access. Be sure to include a way to match the data to the survey it came from. I recommend numbering each survey with the date an identifying number. For example the first survey collected on May 18, 2017 would be 51817-01, the second would be 51817-02, and so on. List the identifying numbers on the left side of the spreadsheet, and the questions/categories across the top. In the following paragraphs I will break this down a little bit more. For an example of this, see below:

Survey #	Gender	Age Range	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
51817-01	3	21-25	4	3	4
51817-02	1	21-25	3	2	4

There are two types of data that you can collect, the first is **qualitative data** or that which is subjective and connected to one person's opinions on their experience(s) at your event. This is best collected through open-ended questions, or questions to which the answer is not "yes" or "no". Below, in the left-side column are some examples of qualitative questions you might ask on a survey of event participants, on the right I've left room for you to write some questions more specific to your event if you decide to use surveys for feedback:

What part of this event did you feel was particularly powerful and why?	
What would you change any, if anything, about this event, and why?	
What are your overall thoughts about the event?	

When entering this data into a document write exactly as the survey participant did. This ensures a stronger feeling of authenticity to your data and enables you to examine the impact of your work more consciously.

Key Terms

- Quantitative Data

The second type of data you can collect is **quantitative data**, or number-based data. This is a great place for "yes" and "no" questions, as well as questions which utilize numerical scales to express the participants' feedback. Always make sure to tell the individual what each number means. Again I have provided some examples of quantitative questions in the left-side column below, on the right I have left room for you to develop some of your own quantitative questions. I have use a scale of one (1) through five (5) so that the participant can mark how much they agree or don't agree with a statement, the participant can choose any of the following numbers. (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Unsure, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

Would you attend this, or a similar event again in the future? _yes __no	
I would recommend this event/program to a friend. __1 __2 __3 __4 __5	
I learned a lot about (topic of event) during this event. __1 __2 __3 __4 __5	

Enter the data into a single-place and be able to find the mean (average) of the numerical data as well as see how many times each number response appears for each question. Make sure to include a key explaining what each number means like I did above explaining that for the statements where participants could choose between Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (5).

In addition to collecting feedback about your event you can utilize this method to collect information about the demographics of your attendees. This may help you discover which communities you reached most effectively and which you might need to target more directly. Some information you may want to know about your attendees includes their age, gender, education level, ethnicity or racial identity, and where/how they heard about your event. Make sure to provide multiple choice options, but also include "other" as an option with a blank space so they can fill in how their answer. In entering this data I would assign a number for each possible answer a participant can choose. For example, if you ask for information on the participant's gender identity and have five possible answers including man, woman, transgender, nonbinary, other; each of these would have a corresponding number to simplify the data entry. Man

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would be 1, Woman 2, Transgender 3, Nonbinary 4, Other 5. Having previously numbered the surveys and the data entry, you can look back to see what someone who marks "Other" has specified as all of that person's responses will be listed in the same row as that survey's number.

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Documenting Media Response

As I mentioned in the checklist above, I recommend documenting all media responses to your events/work as it comes in. This includes saving links to online reports, screenshots, and requesting copies of the news reports about your event. To move forward in making sure the media knows what's happening at your event I recommend writing a press release and providing contact information for your group's organizers. Provide the same information to the news media that you provide to would-be participants, but also include additional information for those unable to attend or deciding whether or not to attend.

Provide the media with all of the information it would take for them to cover live or in-person. This includes who, what, when, where, and why, as well as your mission statement, the main goal of the event, and convey an invitation to the event, or, if after the fact, a summary of who did come to the event. Share this press

release with local news stations, newspapers, and potentially the local radio stations also. Make sure people know who to contact with questions, for an interview, with or where to find more information in general.

In case of marches, sit ins or other direct action protests you might refer participants to directly contact a few people well-versed in who your group is and why the action matters/why you chose specific methods--especially if those methods are controversial in any way. Again, try to get copies of anything aired online, or at least document where and when specific stations or news agencies reported on your action/ event.

Conclusion

Documentation serves to prove that you have already made, are, or are planning to make a difference. It aids in creating a community narrative of change and helps to facilitate funding through grants or donations ,both public and private. It is a process which begins day one, when you or your group get together and say something needs to change. Collect pieces of evidence that reflect both qualitative and quantitative data. Collect information and document the change you make happen as you form your goals and then achieve those goals.

Recognizing where you have been helps you to know where you're going, even if that means moving on from a project, the goals completed or the needs mitigated or disappeared. Documentation brings you back to knowing where you began and understanding that endings are not concrete finish lines but a grey space to continue from. In addition, documenting your event or protest makes the process of creating change visible and can provide tools and lessons for future organizers. For example, I have learned a lot about peaceful protest from the Civil Rights Movement, and about art

as activism from other artists/activists whose work was well-documented as change-making and awareness raising. Your action may be small, or maybe you end up feeling it did not make that much of a difference, but it serves as a place to begin for your community. What worked for you may work for others, what didn't work may be modified or not used again, but it is always something to be learned from.

In the next chapter, you will learn reasons why documenting your efforts is important for you as an activist. Knowing where you have been helps you to know where you are and where you will go in the future, especially in terms of community organizing and creating change.

CHAPTER 6

BEGIN AGAIN

Autoethnography: Do Not Go Back to Sleep

Now that you have fought a good fight, completed tasks to bring good to the world, you want to rest. Your mission has been completed, right? But the thing is, there is more to be done in the world, in your community. This is no time to give up, this is the time to begin again.

Throughout high school and my undergraduate career I was so enthralled with social justice work and community organizing that I was most known for being an activist. Nearly five years after graduating high school I went back to see the ways change I helped create in 2010 manifested itself. In December 2014 I was honored to know that people were still fighting for equity for LGBTQ+ students in that environment. They did not give up.

To be honest, after I graduated from college, I was not as involved as I had hoped to be. My activism was incredibly connected to belonging to an institution, and I did not any more. I engaged with the LGBTQ+ community in smaller amounts, going to events and offering my services as a photographer. I was still conscious of oppression and injustice but not as engaged with challenging them outside of myself. Then I applied for graduate school, not quite sure of what I would be doing except following a passion to teach about gender, sexuality, and intersectionality from a social justice perspective. Moving away from my hometown with my spouse left me without community connections, and those are not easy to build. But it would be an opportunity to move forward, become engaged.

This project, my graduate thesis, is my way of becoming involved again, of teaching about social justice and community organizing in a way that was accessible to other people. It makes me think more about what kind of citizen/community member/ activist I want to continue to be, and my hope is that it will help you think about that as well. Creating this workbook is about staying awake and engaging with others who create change in a wide variety of manners and to a large variant of degrees.
You are engaging in creating change. and even if you will not change the entire world you can change the world within your reach. Creating change is not easy, and passions change. You may find that you have given all you can to one movement or you have become more passionate about something else; that is okay. Move on to what is next for you, but where possible leave a legacy that can keep on creating the change you initially dreamed of.

Working Through How To Begin Again

If you use this workbook to learn about power, privilege, and oppression, or intersectionality, share that information with those you care about, with your community. Apply it to your organizing to make your work accessible to a broader range of people, but especially to those marginalized or oppressed communities who need organizing which challenges the power systems which oppress them.

If you use this workbook to figure out what your passions are and how to apply them to create change, to organize your community, continue doing so. Your passions, which likely stem from the cake recipe from chapter 2, help make you, you. As a person dedicated to creating change, to improving circumstances in your community or helping out people in need, being passionate about your work matters.

If you use this workbook to learn how to create a plan and organize change

based on that plan remember that methods from this workbook can be repeated and informed by your accomplishments. Remember that you can go back and make another plan to create more change. Your continued efforts will be seen in the improvement of your community, in the challenging of power systems which oppress others, in the families whom you assist, or in the sense of accomplishment at the end of the day, knowing you tried to make a difference.

If you use this workbook to learn how to document your work then remember to make it your own. Have fun with the process, do not forget to engage with the event you organized. Be present. The documentation of events is going to assist you in a wide variety of ways, but truthfully it serves as public memory. Do not let people forget the systems of power, privilege and oppression, injustice, or negative circumstance which made you take action to begin with.

If you use this workbook to figure out how to begin again, I encourage you to keep going. Create more plans and follow through. Follow your passions, follow your heart. Be conscious of difference but also of sameness.

I hope that this workbook has brought you into a better understanding of yourself and the issues of power, privilege, and oppression that exist in this world, and although there are several ways to use this tool, the most common options are to create change and/or to fill a need in your community. Having accomplished your goals it is important to know that you can keep going. Keep creating change and filling needs.

Once you have been awakened, once you have seen the ways disproportionate power dynamics negatively affect marginalized communities, you cannot forget, you cannot unsee. When I moved to Iowa I floundered in the social justice world. I did not have the community here or the connections to this area that I had back home, but I

did not stop being awake to what was happening. I didn't go back to sleep. This is where this book was born from, and I continue to incorporate education about LGBTQ+ issues and social justice into the work I do everyday.

Conclusion

Keep the drive to create change with you, begin again. Always begin again, maybe in a different way than you once would have but still seeking change and making change where and when you are able. Do not go back to sleep.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following is a list of terms including those which you have read about in this workbook and which you may come across in other social justice or community organizing contexts. This list is not all-inclusive and accepted or appropriate language is a frequently changing aspect of this work. At the end of the glossary there is space for you to add terms and understandings which I have missed or which have changed since this workbook was printed.

A

Ableism- a system of oppression based on the social construction of superior and inferior physicality or mentality which subordinates, or oppresses, those with disabilities. See also: -isms

Accessibility– the level at which individuals of varying abilities and identities can gain access to, and participate in, a given event, reading, or place.

Accomplice– a term out of the Black Lives Matter movement which denotes being complicit in a struggle for liberation.

Activist– an individual who actively works toward challenging systems of power, privilege and oppression.

Additive Approach to Intersectionality– an approach to intersectionality in which all aspects of an individual's identity (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc) are added onto each other and therefore, subtracted from the individual as well.

Ageism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of age superiority and inferiority where the young and the elderly both face oppression. See also: -isms

Ally– an individual who works alongside an oppressed and/or marginalized group to meet that group's needs as identified by the marginalized/oppressed group.

Allyship– the act of being an ally

Aromantic (Aro)- a spectrum of identities categorized by not having romantic interest in any individual or group, and/or having conditional interest in an individual or group.

Asexual (Ace)– a spectrum of sexualities categorized by not having romantic interest in any individual or group, and/or having conditional interest in an individual or group.

B

Binary– there are two options only. Example: black and whit, male and female.

Bisexual– sexually attracted to two or more genders

C

Circumstance Based Passion– a passion to create change or for community sparked by a specific set of circumstances which affect you, someone you know, or a community to which the actor feels a connection

Cisgender– when an individual's gender identity matches that which was assigned to them at birth, based on primary sex characteristics.

Cissexism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of gender superiority and inferiority in which transgender or gender nonconforming people are subordinated based on their gender identity. See also: -isms

Civil Disobedience– the act of knowingly and intentionally breaking the law in the name of raising awareness about the unjustness of the law itself or its application

Classism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of superiority and inferiority based on socio-economic class in which the poor are subordinated based on their economic condition. See also: -isms

Coalition–an alliance made up of multiple groups seeking the same or similar change regarding an issue.

Collective Direct Action– direct action engaged in by more than one person and/or group (See also: Direct Action)

Color Blind Racism- [claiming] not to recognize people by race or ethnicity. Example: the statement, "I'm not racist, my best friend is black."

Community– a group of people who inhabit a same space or identity group who identify or connect with each other based on that shared aspect.

Craftivism– a craft or art based form of activism used to raise awareness or make statements related to activism

Culture– the practices and beliefs of a group of people

Cultural Appropriation– the adoption or utilization of aspects of one culture by another culture often without recognition of origins and/or significance of the aspects being used to the originating culture

D

Direct Action– actions through which activists engage directly with the issues they are organizing around. Examples include: sit-ins, marches, rallies, petitions. May take

place individually or collectively (see also Individual Direct Action, and Collective direct action

Disabled– having a physical or mental/emotional impairment which significantly interferes with a major life activity

Discrimination– differential treatment for, or against, a person or group based on an identity which they inhabit

E

Elevator Pitch– a concise speech explaining goals and methods of the organizing work you are doing

Empathy Based Passion– passion to create change or organize based on an understanding of the feeling and/or experience of a person or persons directly affected are experiencing.

Equality– all people have access to the same rights

Equity– All people have access to the same rights, of the same quality and which are enforced in the same manner regardless of identity.

Ethnicity- belonging to a specific social group which is identified by common cultural beliefs or nationality

F

Feminism– the belief and practice toward the idea that women deserve to be treated equally to men.

First Nations (People)- Indigenous populations in any country who may identify themselves as Indians or Indigenous Peoples. The language around this identity is determine by the group it applies to.

G

Gender Fluid– an individual who recognizes their gender identity as not being static or as changing throughout periods of time.

Gender Identity– refers to the gender that an individual identifies themselves as regardless of sex or gender designated at birth. Related terms: transgender; cisgender

Genderqueer– a gender identity which does not follow social norms as related to the binary, someone who identifies as genderqueer may or may not identify with the binary or may identify to a combination of binary genders and/or nonbinary genders

Grassroots– bottom-up organizing, or organizing which is done by everyday people seeking social change within their community, between communities and/or within the government

H

Hashtagging– a form of signal boosting utilizing hashtags on social media, for example: #BlackLivesMatter, #deleteUber, #womensmarch

Heterosexism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of a normative sexual or romantic orientation in which non-heterosexual/ non-heteroromantic people are subordinated based on their romantic or sexual orientations. See also: -isms

Homophobia– a dislike or prejudice against homosexual and/or homoromantic people as a group

Homosexual/ Homoromantic– a sexual and/or romantic orientation in which an individual of one gender identity is attracted to someone of the same gender.

I

Identity– an aspect an individual and/or group which is held as being definitive of who they are and/or what they stand for.

Identity Based Passion– a passion to create change or educate about something because it relates to a personal identity such as gender, sexual/romantic orientation, class, race, ethnicity, etc.

Identity saliency– the degree to which someone is aware of a specific identity aspect depending on circumstances or environment

Indian– see First Nations People

Indigenous– the people who are native to a specific land or territory, see also First Nations People

Individual Direct Action– direct action engaged in by an individual, see also Direct Action

Institutional Oppression– the utilization of laws and policies to maintain power structures on behalf of privileged groups

Internalized Oppression– the belief of an oppressed individual that biased perspectives about themselves are true and/or that they do not deserve the same rights and/or privileges as an individual from a non-marginalized identity group

Interpersonal Oppression-the maintenance of Otherness and disenfranchisement of those who deviate from the norm by choice or by birth by those who inhabit normative or privileged identities

Intersectionality– the ways in which an individual's various social identities interact to form a singular individual with a specific social location due to belonging to both dominant/privileged and oppressed/marginalized groups

Intersectional Activism– activism aware of the ways in which a given issue effects individuals of varying social identity groups in different ways

Islamaphobia– the fear of or hate towards and of Muslims

L

LGBTQ+- an acronym used to refer to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer community utilizing the + to recognize that the list is not all-inclusive of every gender and/or romantic and/or sexual identity

M

Marginalized– belonging to an identity group which deviates from a given cultural norm and/or which is oppressed by dominant identity groups

Moral Shock– a motivator for creating change or community organizing based on moral or emotionally shocking, surprising, and/or disturbing, encounter or event

Multiplicative Approach to Intersectionality– an approach to intersectionality which maintains that different identity aspects are like ingredients in a cake, inseparable, as individuals are always all of their identities at once.

N

Nationality– the national origins of, or belonging to, a particular nation or country

Normative– the dominant identities in a social setting

O

Oppression– the denial of rights of marginalized or non-dominant individuals and social groups by dominant and/or privileged social groups or members thereof; oppression is seen at intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional levels

Outing– the act of disclosing an aspect or aspects of an individual's identity typically without their permission and often the disclosed identity is part of a marginalized or oppressed group

P

Panromantic– a romantic orientation which involves romantic attraction to people of multiple gender identities including binary, nonbinary, and genderqueer/fluid individuals

Pansexual- a sexual orientation which involves sexual attraction to people of multiple gender identities including binary, nonbinary, and genderqueer/fluid individuals

Passing the Mic– a form of signal boosting in which a person in a position or with an opportunity to spread a message then gives that opportunity to organizers of movements they seek to support

Patriarchy– a social system in which masculinity and cis-gender maleness is privileged over other gender identities, presentations, and expressions

People of Color– people who are not white

Power– the ability to influence systems or exercise control over people or institutions which others may not have

Prejudice– a judgement of an individual and/or group based on stereotypes about and prior interactions with an individual and/or group of the same identity

Privilege– having access to unearned benefits based on a dominant social identity

Power, Privilege, Oppression (PPO)- three different aspects which create systems in which people with power have privileges and oppress those individuals and groups who are not part of the dominant social group which has power and privilege

Pronouns– the words which one uses to refer to an individual other than that person's name. Examples: he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs.

Q

Qualitative Data– information which is subjective, or connected to one person's opinions

Quantitative Data– information which is based in numbers or concrete answers

Queer– identities which deviate from social and cultural norms, frequently associated with gender variance and non-heteronormativity. This term is also an identity label in itself, and can be seen as a resignified word, or a word with a meaning intentionally changed by an individual and/or social group to which it was previously used as a slur

R

Race– a social construction used to describe a group identity based on a common heritage

Racism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of a racial hierarchy. In the United States this system subordinates people of color for the benefit of white people. See also: -isms

Romantic Orientation– a spectrum of identities based on the genders to which an individual holds romantic/emotional feelings

Root Cause– the ultimate reason for something occurring

S

Sex– the identity based on anatomy and/or identification with a specific gender. See also: sex designated at birth, gender

Sex designated at birth– the assignment of a gender identity and therefore social role by a doctor, based primarily on genitalia and other anatomical characteristics

Sexism– a system of oppression based on the social construction of gender in which females/women are subordinated to males/men. See also: -isms

Sexual orientation– a spectrum of identities based on the genders to which an individual is sexually attracted to and/or sexually aroused by

Sexuality– the articulation and/or expression of an individuals sexual interests

Signal Boosting– the act of sharing the message of a group, often via social or news media, in order to promote the actions of activist and/or raise awareness for the issues the message addresses

Slacktivism– an oversimplified, often technology based, method of activist work

Social Category– varying identities such as race, class, gender, romantic orientation, ability etc.

Social Construct– a concept, idea, or norm which changes based on where and when it is being used or referred to

Social Justice– when all people live equitably and have equitable access to life needs

T

Tokenize– using one person of an identity to represent all people of that identity group

Trans– a spectrum of gender identities which stem from and individual not identifying with the gender and/or sex which was assigned to them at birth, may be used as an umbrella term. See also transgender, cisgender

Transgender- a spectrum of gender identities which stem from and individual not identifying with the gender and/or sex which was assigned to them at birth, may be used as an umbrella term. See also trans, cisgender

Transphobia-the irrational fear/hate of individuals who are not cisgender and/or who do not enact the gender roles they were assigned at birth, often confused with cissexism

Trigger– a topic or situation which causes extreme emotional and/or physical distress for an individual

Trigger Warning– a notice about content given to aid in self care for those who have mental and/or physical needs in contexts or with content that causes them extreme emotional and/or physical distress

W

White privilege– unearned benefits which all white people benefit from both as individuals and as a group

X

Xenophobia– the irrational fear or hatred of a person or group of people based on their racial and/or ethnic group. See also, racism

Add Your Own Terms

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