

Crisis Management Handbook

Twin Cities G.D.C., Local 14

Working Draft Last Revised: April 2017



Contents

1. Quick Start	4
2. Introduction	6
2.1. Forward!	6
3. Multiple Dimensions and registers of security in a crisis	7
4. The Committee	9
4.1. Communication tools to use	9
4.2. Communication discipline and emotional management	10
4.3. Committee roles	10
4.3.1. Point Person	10
4.3.2. Physical Security- Lead	11
4.3.3. Physical Security - Medical Advocate	11
4.3.4. Information Security - InfoSec Lead	11
4.3.5. Financial Security - Fundraiser	12
4.3.6. Political Security - Media Liaison	12
4.3.7. Political Security - Legal Liaison	12
4.3.8. Political Security - Strategy Response Planning Committee	13
4.3.9. Liaisons to other involved groups	13
4.4. The Pod model	13
5. Physical Security	19
5.1. Securing physical security in the crisis event	19
5.2. Securing your home	20
5.3. Security watches	22
5.4. Gathering for safety	23
5.5. Vehicles	23
5.6. On the street	24
6. Medical Security	25
6.1. Advocating for medical care	25
7. Information Security	26
7.1. Social Media	26

8. Financial Security	28
9. Media - Intervene to control the narrative	29
9.1. Press releases and interviews	30
9.2. Formatting and releasing press releases	30
9.3. Social media accounts	32
9.4. Weblogs	32
10. Legal security	33
11. Plan a strategic response	34
A. What is the G.D.C.?	36
A.1. Preamble to the General Defense Committee's Bylaws	36
A.2. Goals of the G.D.C.	36
A.3. Preamble to Twin Cities G.D.C. Bylaws	37
A.4. Contact the Twin Cities G.D.C.	37
B. Unionism and Anti-fascism: Statement Opposing All Oppression from the Twin Cities G.D.C. Local 14	38
C. Organization Charts	43

1. Quick Start

Preferably you would have read this book and prepared for a crisis prior to having one. But we know that this will not be the case in many situations. If this is the first time you are encountering this handbook and you are trying to organize around a crisis, we suggest taking the steps below. We assume that you are not reading this handbook while a fellow worker currently requires medical or other interventions to achieve their safety. Assuming that medical and physical safety concerns have been addressed as far as possible for the moment,

1. Stop all other activities and communication. If it's a real crisis, focus on this alone.
2. Form a core committee of people dealing with the crisis.
 - a) The committee should be composed of at least three people and perhaps as many as ten, each person focused on different aspects of managing the crisis: physical security, financial security, political security, etc.. If you are capable of adding a fourth, we suggest a person focused on logistics. If the crisis includes a victim, a representative of the victim support pod should be included in this committee. Refer to "The Pod Model" for information on organizing via the Pod Model.
 - b) Ideally these are people you already know and trust. That will not always be able to be the case. If pre-existing experience and trust does not already exist, be clear that this is an opportunity to build such trust, and that in order to do so, everyone needs to be forthright and explicit about their commitments, capacities, and limits. Be explicit about everything, including roles and expectations. This will help reduce serious miscommunication, and as a result build the necessary trust.
 - c) Refer to the 'creating the committee' section for more advice on how to create an effective committee.
3. Once you have a core committee, create a means of communicating with each other. Email lists are fine, but most of the time you will need to communicate more frequently. We have successfully used the Electronic Frontier Foundation's (E.F.F.) Signal App.
4. With the committee, brainstorm all possible needs, focusing first on physical safety, then social and financial safety, and then political safety.
5. With the committee, brainstorm possible strategies to meet those needs. Debate these properly. Once a strategy to meet a need has been agreed upon, explicitly identify which person is responsible for that task, and the deadline for that task.

6. Stay in constant contact with other members of the committee.

2. Introduction

2.1. Forward!

This document was largely written out of the experience and observation of organizational and logistical challenges that resulted after the shooting of an I.W.W. and G.D.C. member at an anti-Alt-Right protest on the University of Washington, Seattle campus on January 20, 2017. We write this knowing that we will face a wide range of crises to manage successfully. We also write this knowing that we do not have all the answers; at best, we can provide some helpful perspective, guidelines, and advice. The types of oppression we face will not remain the same, and we will have to change and adapt to fight back. Continue to research and learn more about each of the aspects mentioned in this handbook, and *improve* on the knowledge included here. If you are able to improve on it, please send us an email and let us know how, and we will attempt to edit this handbook.

If you have encountered a direct threat to you from the bosses, police, or right-wing assholes, **you did nothing wrong, and the fact that they attacked you is proof that what you have been doing is a threat to them.** We win when we recognize the fear in their eyes, and respond to it with serious organization and defiance.

If you have corrections or suggestions, please send them to erik@riseup.net

Submitted to the progress of the revolution, Erik D. Twin Cities G.D.C., Local 14.

3. Multiple Dimensions and registers of security in a crisis

We have found it helpful to think about managing crises in at least four dimensions, and two registers. Our advice about organizing crisis committees and support pods emerge from this way of thinking about crises.

We think of each crisis as having multiple *dimensions*. That is, every crisis can be broken down into different parts. By breaking it down in that way, we make the overwhelming sense of crisis smaller, more manageable, and begin the process of identifying tasks that need to be done.

There may be more dimensions to a crisis, but the following dimensions appear consistently:

1. **Physical** - The physical security of the individual, their home, workplace, and transportation, along with the physical security of the group, their meeting places, and possible associated targets
2. **Information** (InfoSec) - Securing and maintaining control of individual and group information that could be used to harm us. This especially concerns social media accounts, but also some genealogy sites, and public lookup services. The primary concern here is to audit and then control the information about us available in public.
3. **Financial** - Securing and maintaining finances, including fundraisers, to support individual victims and survivors, as well as the organization itself. This dimensions requires a great deal of transparency and sensitivity to political communication.
4. **Political** - The political reputation of both individuals and the group will be under attack or potential attack during a crisis. Political defense of both registers will require a variety of actions, including press releases and the organization of direct actions. The political dimension of a crisis could include engaging with legal counsel. Alternatively, and especially in the cases where our side is on the defense, the legal dimension could be broken out separately.

We also need the idea of *registers*, because while it is often the case that individuals have the above needs, it is also the case that the organization itself also has the same needs. It is essential that both the **individual register** and the **institutional register** (the I.W.W., e.g.) be secured in all of the above dimensions. We must also be aware that the needs of these two registers may come into conflict with each other. While this book hopes to provide direction and help in managing crisis, we do not pretend that we have all the answers. Indeed, we strongly suspect that there is no "right" answer, if the "right" answer

would result in a perfect outcome for everyone without conflict and compromise. If there is a crisis, we are already on the back foot, and need to work hard to secure our situation as strongly as possible, both as individuals and as radical groups.

4. The Committee

After the immediate physical - including medical - security of individuals has been achieved, the first thing that you must do is create the committee. Composing the committee is crucial. The committee must deal with a series of separate but related challenges, work well together, and be responsible in taking on and completing tasks.

The committee should decide right away on the manner in which they will make decisions. Consensus is often ideal, followed by democratic vote. Additionally, there are several factors that should influence how the committee is composed, and how it makes decisions.

Each committee member will likely take on multiple roles, but should be very careful not to commit themselves beyond their actual or likely capacity.

If there is a victim or survivor, that person's physical, financial, and political security should be centered and prioritized by the committee as a whole, to the extent this is possible. In these cases, the support necessary for an individual often exceed the capacity of those volunteering to take on other committee work. When there is a victim or survivor, we recommend creating, in addition to the committee, a **pod** to address and coordinate the support and advocacy needs of the individual (see "The Pod model" section). If there are multiple individuals, we recommend creating a pod for each individual. Pod members do not need to be I.W.W. or G.D.C. members, though it's a good idea for every pod to have at least one member involved, to help explain concepts and practices which may be unusual to other members of the pod. Each Pod should have a representative on the committee. The pod model will be described in more detail later.

4.1. Communication tools to use

- Encrypted text messages (Signal, but also Xabber/Jabber, or Plumble/Mumble if you can run your own server)
- Emails - PGP two-party encryption
- Phone - Stop using it so casually. It can record you without you knowing it, controlled remotely, and its GPS means you can be tracked with it. Don't bring it into meetings where sensitive stuff is discussed; leave them in a different room (turning them off isn't enough). Physical paper - Don't write down any sensitive information. If sensitive information is written down, control that paper explicitly and intentionally, or destroy it. Archiving - archive all material related to the crisis that represents no legal risk. This will be important for support and legal action later.

4.2. Communication discipline and emotional management

Controlling communications with the public, and being mindful of how we interact with each other, are crucial to the success of our crisis management teams.

First, in dealing with the public, everyone should immediately stop talking and posting anything about the event on social media or any potentially public forum. It is crucial to practice communication discipline. Instead of trying to overwhelm social media with a narrative, organize your narrative and elect a good media representative to deliver it. Having the same point person is important.

Second, in dealing with each other, both people you know and people who are just now becoming familiar to you because they are involved on the crisis management team, make certain to treat each other with more patience than usual. The stress and increased sudden responsibilities on all participants will require more emotional regulation than usual in order to preserve trust and success among team members. A few suggestions for communicating with each other within the team:

- Take people seriously, and their words seriously.
- Ignore everybody's tone.
- Pause before replying.
- Remember that everyone is stressed and freaking out.
- Have a clear goal; remember your goal.
- Be task-oriented. Try to avoid discussions of principle when the issue is logistical.
- Be willing to deal with minor problems later.

4.3. Committee roles

The committee should be composed of individuals selected for their skill in dealing with specific types of tasks, their trustworthiness and responsibility, and their ability to work well with other members of the committee. If each member has a particular defined area of responsibility, it becomes far less likely that the committee will fail to make progress on an issue because members are assuming that other members are dealing with it.

4.3.1. Point Person

Having a point person reduces the amount of confusion, and false moves, that emerge from not having clear and defined lines of communication. A point person is not the same thing as an authority figure - though in some cases, such as when we are primarily supporting a single individual - a point person who is that individual may also be treated as authoritative.

The middle of an acute crisis is a difficult context in which to make democratic decisions. The role of Point is as facilitator and 'chair' of the crisis management committee. Most of the work of the Point position relates to project management internal to the crisis

management team, keeping track of tasks that need to be done, and who is doing them, making certain that communication is maintained, and checking in with people who have taken on tasks. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate for the chair to have final approval authority on actions or press releases (for instance, if the press release involves personal details of a member). In other situations, the chair should be limited to facilitation roles. These should be explicitly decided by the committee as a whole. Regardless, for the purposes of coordination, actions should be coordinated via the Point person.

The point person will almost certainly also take on a separate role within the committee. So for instance, a person might be both Point and Physical Security Lead, or Point and a Pod Liaison.

For higher risk actions, have a trusted person volunteer or be elected before the action, to serve as an *emergency point person* in case crisis management becomes necessary after the action. This person should have no major roles during the action itself so they have all their mental resources available if they need to set up an initial crisis management committee and attend to other emergency contingencies. Having this role planned ahead of time could save precious minutes or hours during a crisis situation when everyone is panicking and unsure of who should play what roles during the fallout after the crisis. Anyone who takes on this role should be familiar with the procedures of this handbook.

4.3.2. Physical Security- Lead

- This person should be assigned the tasks of auditing members' security situations (homes, workplaces, transportation routines) when requested, and helping to organize security watches when necessary. The person with the most experience in providing physical security should take this role.

4.3.3. Physical Security - Medical Advocate

If the crisis in question includes a medical crisis, the patient should have an advocate, unless they decline one. An advocate's job is to remain with the patient at all times the patient wants them there, to ensure the patient is comfortable with discussions and decisions being made, and understands them properly. In many cases this should be the close family member of the victim in question. All decisions that relate to the victim's medical, legal, or media representation should be go through the Victim Advocate, if they cannot go through the person directly affected (i.e., they are unconscious).

4.3.4. Information Security - InfoSec Lead

A person with technical skills should immediately begin to audit the social media accounts, and other online information, relevant to individuals and groups. This person should be given access to contact information for members and reach out to offer audits and help in securing accounts.

4.3.5. Financial Security - Fundraiser

Radicals and activists routinely neglect their own financial security. This is true on a day-to-day basis, and true in crisis situations. Our critique of capitalism shouldn't encourage us to bare our throat to the knives of the capitalist system; we should defend ourselves financially, as well as physically and politically.

Especially if there is a victim or survivor involved, there will be a substantial need for funds. Because the I.W.W. is a small radical union with low dues and few resources (and the G.D.C. even smaller and poorer), we are never likely to simply have necessary financial resources on hand prior to a crisis. This means we must fundraise. The fundraiser should be a person capable of handling bureaucratic, financial, and technical aspects associated with the fundraiser. They will work closely with the media liaison in composing the description of the fundraiser(s) and in its promotion.

It is probably best to coordinate fundraisers through either the I.W.W. or G.D.C. Central. Contact the C.S.T. of the G.D.C. at gdc@iww.org, or General Headquarters of the I.W.W. at ghq@iww.org. The additional credibility of having the I.W.W./G.D.C. do this will result in higher donations, and the pre-existing financial infrastructure of G.D.C. Central will reduce the tasks needed by those closest to the work.

It's important to check the terms of service of various online fundraising services before setting up a fundraiser. Some services do not permit fundraising for legal costs, or legal defense costs, while others do. Different services take different amounts of money as their service fee. At this writing, the G.D.C. uses Crowdrise, which does permit for legal costs fundraising.

4.3.6. Political Security - Media Liaison

A confused set of engagements with the press will harm your campaign. Therefore, it is vital to have a single media liaison during a crisis. If multiple people interact with the press, the narrative you are advancing will be confused. The media liaison should handle all press inquiries following the press release, including replying "No comment at this time." The media liaison should take their directions from the point person.

The media liaison should be a person who

- Is socially savvy
- Is well-spoken
- Is careful with their words

4.3.7. Political Security - Legal Liaison

This person should be assigned the task of maintaining contact with any lawyers involved in the process, and accept responsibility for communicating both ways, and communicating necessary tasks.

4.3.8. Political Security - Strategy Response Planning Committee

Like the Support Pod, the Strategic Response Planning Committee is a separate body that should liaise with the Crisis Management Committee. There should probably be a significant overlap in the memberships.

The best response is a disciplined and defiant response to the crisis, organized as quickly as discipline and organization permit. Silence on a crisis is deeply demoralizing. In contrast, in our experience, some of the greatest moves forward we have made have taken place as a result of our rapid response to crisis.

This committee should be composed of skillful strategic thinkers who can draft a specific plan, including the necessary tasks and roles necessary. Members of this committee should ideally have taken the G.D.C. Picket/Marshal Training.

For organizational political security, one important task could be, after messaging is finalized, reaching out to other organizations around the city to ask for support. The coordination of this organizational outreach this could be it's own role, or could be an extension of the duties of the *Emergency Point Person* mentioned briefly in the section on "Point Person."

Support from other orgs could be financial, political (signing onto a letter condemning some aggressor against the I.W.W. and expressing solidarity), legal (if they know lawyers), etc.... If things are hot, having the implicit or explicit support of other groups can build real solidarity and improve morale, decreasing the paralyzing sense of isolation. Planning a solidarity rally with the other groups after a crisis could be a way to build political defense against ideological attacks from the media and/or far right. Even if such a rally were purely symbolic, it could send a strong message on its own and strengthen relationships with other organizations that may be crucial in navigating the rest of the crisis and/or future crises. Reaching out to national organizations could also be important, whether that's the national organization of the I.W.W./G.D.C., the N.L.G., etc.... In all these cases, it's best if the response is *led and politically directed by* the I.W.W./G.D.C., and *supported by* other organizations.

4.3.9. Liaisons to other involved groups

In the likely case that multiple groups are involved in the management of a crisis, individual members of the committee should take responsibility for liaising with each individual group. Usually liaisons to groups will have other roles within the committee as well.

4.4. The Pod model

If the crisis involves ongoing support of a survivor, or family members of a victim, then we strongly encourage the creation of a support pod. We take the idea of a 'pod,' and the means of creating it, as well as the included worksheet, from the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC), and has been used successfully in the Twin Cities G.D.C.

Survivors Support Working Group. The full post on pods from that BATJC can be found at: <https://batjc.wordpress.com/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/>

For our immediate purposes, the point of a 'pod' is to explicitly identify the core support network of an individual by socially mapping their existing network, and then getting designated individuals in that network to agree to act as support members. Without such pre-existing relationships, the challenge of providing consistent and responsive support increases. This can be dealt with by increasing the explicitness with which members of the pod discuss with each other.

The rest of this section is taken directly from the BATJC page:

Your pod is made up of the people that you would call on if violence, harm or abuse happened to you; or the people that you would call on if you wanted support in taking accountability for violence, harm or abuse that youve done; or if you witnessed violence or if someone you care about was being violent or being abused.

People can have multiple pods. The people you call to support you when you are being harmed may not be the same people you call on to support you when you have done harm, and vice versa. In general, pod people are often those you have relationship and trust with, though everyone has different criteria for their pods.

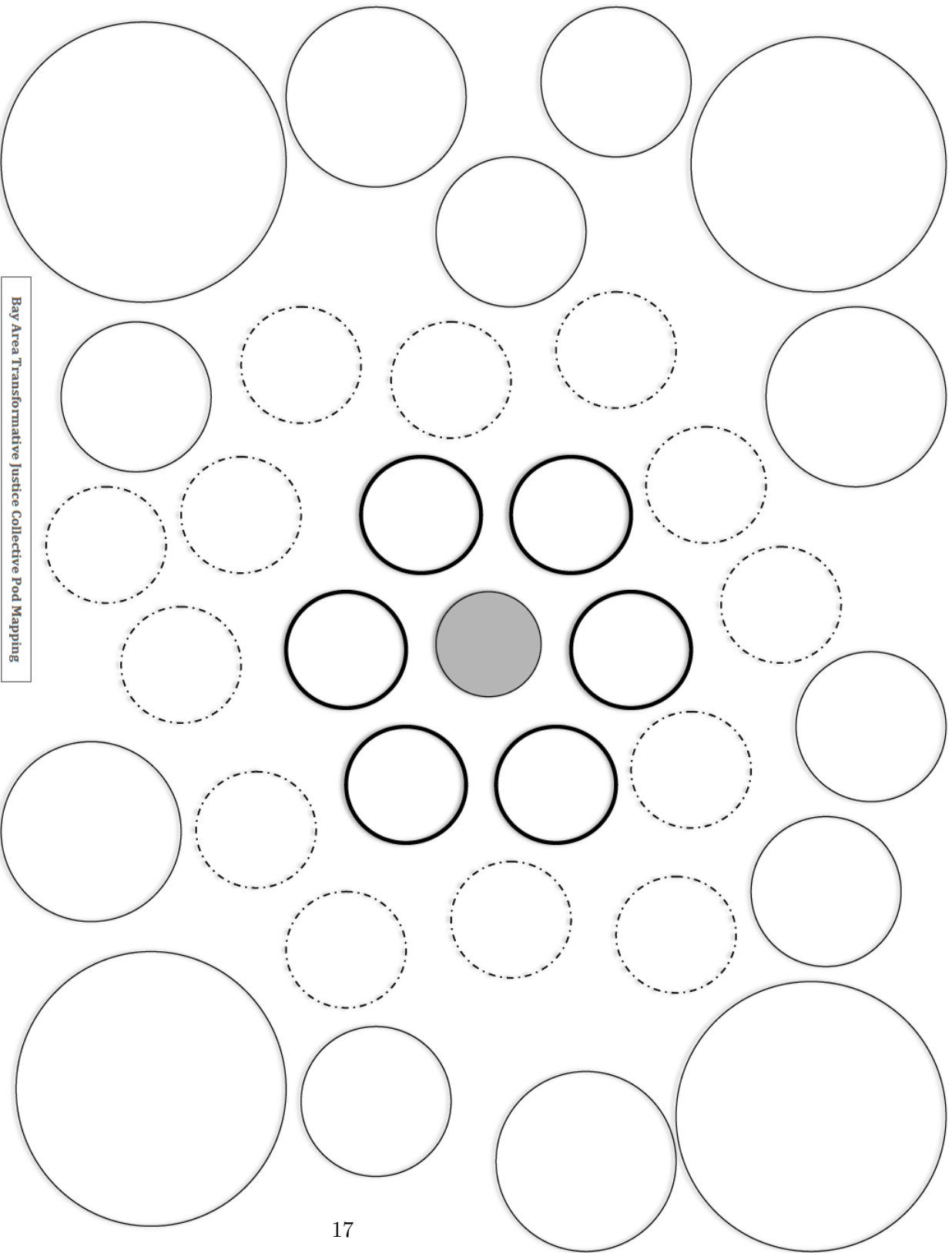
Once we started using the term pods, we realized a bunch of things:

- **Most people have few solid, dependable relationships in their lives.** Much of this is from the breaking of relationships, isolation, fear and criminalization that capitalism requires. We found that for many people, mapping their pod was a sobering process, as many thought their pod would be larger than it actually was. It is not uncommon for most people to have 1 or 2 people in their pod. We reassure people this is not a popularity contest, but rather a chance to reflect on why we have so few relationships with the kind of deep trust, reliability and groundedness we need to be able to respond well to violence.
- **Many people have less people they could call on to take accountability for harm theyve done than harm that happened to them.** Though competent support for surviving violence is few and far between, we have found that accountable support for someone taking accountability for harm they have done is even harder to find. More often than not, people end up colluding with abusers or reinforcing the shaming and blaming of survivors in their attempt to support someone in taking accountability for harm, if they stay in relationship with people who have harmed or been violent at all.

- **Asking people to organize their pod was much more concrete than asking people to organize their community.** Once we had the shared language and concept of pod, it allowed transformative justice to be more accessible. Gone were the fantasies of a giant, magical community response, filled with people we only had surface relationships with; and instead we challenged ourselves and others to build solid pods of people through relationship and trust. In doing so, we are pushed to get specific about what those relationships look like and how they are built. It places relationship-building at the very center of transformative justice and community accountability work.
- **Pod people dont fall neatly along traditional lines, especially in situations of intimate and sexual violence.** People dont necessarily turn to their closest relationships (e.g. partner, family, best friends), especially because this is often where the violence is coming from, but also because the criteria we would use for our pod people is not necessarily the same as what we use (or get taught to use) for our general intimate relationships. We have different and specific kinds of relationships with our pod people, often in addition to relationship and trust, they involve a combination of characteristics such as, but not limited to: a track record of generative conflict; boundaries; being able to give and receive feedback; reliability. These are characteristics and skills that we are not readily taught to value in U.S. society and dont usually have the skillset to support in even our closest relationships.
- **Building analysis was much easier than building the relationship and trust required for ones pod.** Once people started to identify their pod, it became clear that most of the people they would call on were not necessarily political organizers or activists and usually didnt have political analysis. This was true, even for political organizers and activists who were mapping their pods. Using the language of pods was a way to meet people where they were and reveal what was already working in their intimate networks. People already had individuals in their lives they would turn to when violence happened (even if it was just one person). So this is where we needed to focus our work, instead of trying to build new relationships with strangers who might share a political analysis, but had no relationship to each other, let alone trust. We set out to build through our relationships and trust. We then worked to support our folks in cultivating a shared analysis and framework for understanding intimate and sexual violence through many things, most notably our transformative justice studies.
- **The BATJC focuses on transformative justice responses to child sexual abuse.** Growing and deepening our pods helps us build where children already are. Utilizing the concept of pods is a way to reach children where they are because a 5 year old is not going to reach out to

us for support, nor should they be expected to spearhead a community accountability process. The more we can grow our own pods and have conversations about protecting and supporting the children and youth in our lives, the better prepared we will be to respond to child sexual abuse in our intimate networks.

- **Relationship and trust, not always political analysis, continue to be two of the most important factors in successful TJ interventions, whether in supporting survivor self determination and healing, or in accountability processes.** Though shared language, values, and political understandings can be very useful in responding to violence, we find that these are easier to build where relationship and trust already exist. By building where there is already authentic relationships and trust, rather than trying to piece together shallow versions, we help to set the conditions for, not only, successful TJ responses, but the likelihood that people will respond to violence at all.
- **There are many people who do not have any pod people.** This a very real reality for many oppressed and isolated communities/individuals because of how capitalism, oppression and violence shape our lives. For example, many disabled people are extremely isolated because of lack of access and resources; many immigrant women of color are isolated because of language or documentation; adults, youth and children who are surviving current abuse such as domestic violence may be isolated by their abusers. We hope that by beginning to build and grow pods where they already exist (or could exist), we can help build the conditions to be able to support people who do not have pods. By growing the number of people in the Bay Area who can recognize, talk about, prevent and respond to violence, we hope to make it that much more likely that people in need of support will find it in their daily lives. We also believe that orienting from a place of growing pods can help us gradually move away from the structures that keep people isolated. In this way, building our pods is not only useful for ourselves and the people in our immediate circles, but has the potential to help build a network of pods that could support anyone experiencing violence.



Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective Pod Mapping

BATJC Pod Mapping Worksheet

On the previous page is the Pod Mapping Worksheet. We use this as a template to help people start to identify who could be in their pod(s). We invite people to fill out multiple worksheets for their different pods. This is only a basic template, people are welcome to create their own pod maps.

1. Write your name in the middle grey circle.
2. The surrounding bold-outlined circles are your pod. Write the names of the people who are in your pod. We encourage people to write the names of actual individuals, instead of things such as "my church group" or "my neighbors."
3. The dotted lines surrounding your pod are people who are movable. They are people that could be moved in to your pod, but need a little more work. For example, you might need to build more relationship or trust with them. Or maybe youve never had a conversation with them about prisons or sexual violence.
4. The larger circles at the edge of the page are for networks, communities or groups that could be resources for you. It could be your local domestic violence direct service organization, or your cohort in nursing school, or your youth group, or a transformative justice group.

Your pod(s) may shift over time, as your needs or relationships shift or as peoples geographic location shift. We encourage people to have conversations with their pod people about pods and transformative justice, as well as to actively grow the number of people in their pod and support each other in doing so. Growing ones pod is not easy and may take time. In pod work, we measure our successes by the quality of our relationships with one another and we invest in the time it takes to build things like trust, respect, vulnerability, accountability, care and love. We see building our pods as a concrete way to prepare and build resources for transformative justice in our communities.

5. Physical Security

This section of the handbook deals with the basics of securing and maintaining physical security in order to deal with crises. These should be done ahead of time and maintained as a regular discipline. If, however, you are dealing with these issues in the aftermath of a crisis, take great care to attend to all the possible issues.

5.1. Securing physical security in the crisis event

Members should be encouraged to consider training in a form of physical self defense, if possible. There are many different styles of self-defense; it is less important that members train in a particular style of self-defense than it is that they train in a style which is accessible to them, and in which they can make a commitment to regular training. It is difficult to make concrete suggestions about securing physical safety without concrete situations to which to respond, however a few basic principles apply:

- Fight back rather than be taken to a second location.
- Have everyone actually check their bodies for injuries. In a crisis, people often are naturally anesthetized to pain and not even notice the injury.
- If there are injuries and you can remain in place, call for medical assistance (911). It is vital to not move a person with a possible spinal cord injury. If it is possible to safely remain in place, do so.
- If there are injuries, and you are mobile and cannot remain in place, begin to move to a safe place.
- Gather everyone in a single group if at all possible.
- Move as a group to a physically safe location.
- If a physically safe location is not nearby, stage your movement to a physically safe location by planning it through increasingly well-lit and public spaces.
- Do not 'make a run for it' as individuals or through isolated areas, unless there is absolutely no other choice.
- When arriving at a physically safe place, make sure to secure doors and windows after you enter.
- Alert your network as to your location and status.

5.2. Securing your home

There are two ways to think about securing your home, and both need to be thought out. The first is how to make yourself secure within your home, and prepare to stay and defend it. The second is how to escape your home, and where to go.

Obtain the following equipment for your living situation, and make sure it is all in working order, and that everyone knows how to use each item:

- *A working flashlight for each occupant in the home.* Note that you may experience an intentional or unintentional power cut, and have to find your way in the dark. Additionally, you may need to see to leave the house without turning on lights.
- *Have a working fire extinguisher.* A working fire extinguisher is important for dealing with any fires. Every house should have one.
- *A first aid kit* that includes surgical scissors, antiseptic, liquid antacid, n95-grade face masks, and wound bandages. Butterfly bandages, medical tape, and potentially stitching needles and suture thread should be included. Research medicines that are useful for Emergency Room applications, and consider including them here, if appropriate.

Windows and doors

Consider each of the door entrances to your home, and if in a multi-unit building, to your building. Each exterior door (including main unit entrances in multi-unit buildings) should have a deadbolt. All deadbolts should have a minimum 1" throw (length of deadbolt protruding from door) and an ANSI rating of "1." Consider also installing a privacy chain: these do nothing to genuinely secure you from a person who wants inside when your door is open, but can help prevent pushy people from getting into your home, and provide you with an additional modicum of security.

In considering your exterior doors, check the length of the screws on door hinges. Standard door hinge screws tend to be relatively thin and short. If the door has otherwise very strong locking mechanisms, having thicker and longer hinge screws could significantly extend the time it would take for an attacker to kick down a door.

Consider all ground floor windows. Most window units in the United States are double-hung sash windows, though these become less common in the Western and Southwestern parts of the US. For double-hung sash windows on the ground floor, make sure all sash locks (the ability to lock the window closed) are functional and engaged when you are not in a room. Additionally, purchase and install 'ventilating window locks' for your first-floor windows. These allow you to keep your first floor windows open a certain amount, but install stoppers (usually adjustable and therefore removable) above to prevent the windows from opening beyond that amount.

Keep shades drawn when privacy is a concern.

Key control

You should know where every copy of your house key in the world exists, and trust those locations. If you do not, you should replace your locks immediately. If you lose track of any key, you must rekey your exterior locks, or assume you are compromised. Never keep a 'spare key' for lockouts outside your home.

Exterior lights

Exterior lights, usually with automatic sensors, are a good way of preventing casual interlopers on a single-home property, or a property you control. All they do is increase your ability to see outside, and hopefully expose the people outside.

Storing weapons safely

Do not keep weapons - firearms, baseball bats, mace - immediately by your door or windows, especially if you are visible or partially visible from the outside when answering the door. In the case you are responding to a threat that has entered your home, weapons kept next to your doors are likely behind the enemy. Keep weapons in a space en route to the door. Keep firearms locked, preferably in a safe, or with trigger locks.

Physical defense of your home

- Establish a safe room/position. This should be a room that can be defended easily, or a position preferably at a choke point such as the end of a hallway or at the top of a stairwell.
- Keep flashlight, fire extinguisher, your defense weapon(s) of choice and an extra phone in your safe room. Make sure it has a strong door or furniture that can be quickly moved to create a barrier.
- If aggressors arrive at your home, get everyone to the safe room, prepare to defend yourself and use the phone to alert others and request support.

Physical security in leaving your home

There are many situations in which exiting your home is your best safety option.

If you are leaving your home, you must consider the possible contexts ahead of time. Are you likely under threat from state or non-state agents? Different threats behave differently, and each situation should be imagined and planned for. If you live in a private home, do you have an attached garage? How many exits do you have? Find and follow the directions from your local fire department in planning a family evacuation route, but add the difficulty of trying to leave quietly and under stress.

Prepare a second safe place ahead of time. Ideally, this is a place you can get to quickly on foot, and is a person who can be trusted to admit you without hesitation into their home

ahead of time, and has agreed to serve as a backup. This local safe place should probably not be a long-term solution, but a staging area from which to achieve greater safety. You should plan this more-safe situation as well. We recommend that you explicitly arrange local safe staging locations with trusted neighbors, and longer-term safe situations with fellow members, who can be trusted to also have secured their homes.

If you are under present threat - i.e., there are people waiting for you outside to do you harm - it is likely that you should not try to flee. Barricade yourself in place and call for reinforcements. However, some homes are not defensible, and fleeing is sometimes the only option. Make a few escape plans, and identify them as First, Second, and Third. Practice them. If you have your own transportation, consider how to access it quietly, quickly, and safely.

If it is nighttime, don't turn on lights or otherwise draw attention to yourself; use flashlights, especially ones with colored lenses (green is particularly good for some reason). If there are multiple people with you, leave in a single file, with the first person only using a flashlight, and a capable person in the front and in the rear (i.e., children in the middle).

Untrustworthy Roommates

In the situation where you have roommates who are untrustworthy regarding security practices, or even worse, are actively hostile to yourself, you should treat all interior doors as exterior doors, and install a deadbolt, as well as other security procedures. If the roommate is in the house and you do not feel safe, go to a second location.

5.3. Security watches

In some cases, securing the physical safety of our members will require accompanying them, or staying with them in their homes. It is unrealistic and dangerous to expect a single person to effectively keep watch for more than a few hours. Setting up a security watch is a means for dealing with this issue.

How to set up a watch cycle

A security watch is a person or a group of people, called a 'detail,' who are assigned to a location, or a person, for a specified period of time, called a "watch," to ensure their safety. Detail should be composed of people who feel they can take on the predicted challenges and resulting actions.

Split the period of time for the watch into equal segments. A classic example of a watch detail assumes 12 hours of darkness and only has a watch during darkness. The twelve hours (6PM-6AM) are split into 3 periods of 4 hours each: 6PM-10PM, 10PM-2AM, 2AM-6AM: Watch1, Watch2, and Watch3. Detail members should arrive for their assigned watch an agreed amount of time prior to the beginning of the watch (15 minutes, e.g.).

The person who is to be relieved will therefore have additional warning if a person is late, and additional time to arrange a replacement.

Watch duties

Watches should have predefined security tasks, and a predefined schedule for accomplishing those tasks. Details should not allow themselves to take a solely 'responsive' role, but should actively engage in their watch. Examples of tasks:

- Check doors and all windows (every 1 hour, e.g.)
- Make regular phone check-in to person off-site (every 4 hours, or 1/watch, e.g.)
- Walk around the block (every 2 hours, e.g.)
- Watch communication and coordination
- It is important to have a person offsite with whom the watch detail can call and check in about issues. This person should be called on a regular schedule. Text messages may be used in less intense situations, but should not be relied upon for confirmation of serious concerns.

5.4. Gathering for safety

One way to increase security for members of your organization is for half or two thirds of your membership to leave their home, and temporarily stay at the home of the other half or third of the membership. This accomplishes a couple of things:

- More people, and more weapons per household makes for a stronger defense.
- Security watch shifts can be shorter if there are more individuals at each location.
- Members who live geographically farthest away can be moved closer, so help does not take as long to arrive.
- Security and care for children of members and members with physical disability becomes easier.

[noitemsep]

5.5. Vehicles

- Stay as anonymous as possible. No bumper stickers, etc. Assume you are being tracked via your cell phone, and so easily followed.
- Drive legally and defensively.
- Get into public. Get into a place with cameras, people, and lights.
- Call a friend. Give them details on what time it is (especially if you woke them), where you are, and about whom you're calling - give a brief t.v. detective-style description: medium - height - white male - approx 45 years old red ball cap driving large black pickup truck, e.g..

- Stay in public. Do not try to make a break for it through dark territory unless there is absolutely no other option.

5.6. On the street

The basic ideas here are that you are safer with everyone witnessing and watching. This will obviously not be the case if you are being hunted by agents of the state, and in that case, different advice would apply. If, however, you are being threatened by non-state agents, try to get into the most public, crowded, well-lit place possible, as quickly as possible.

- Get into public. Get into a place with cameras, people, and lights.
- Call a friend. Give them details on what time it is (especially if you woke them), where you are, and about whom you're calling - give a brief t.v. detective-style description: "medium - height - white male - approx 45 years old red ball cap driving large black pickup truck", e.g.
- Tell a stranger everything. Loudly. Point.
- Stay in public. Do not try to make a break for it through dark territory unless there is absolutely no other option.

6. Medical Security

6.1. Advocating for medical care

Medical care is often intimidating, especially in a crisis. The role of the medical advocate is to run 'interference' for the patient, handling and organizing all papers, notices, and directions, making certain the patient is comfortable with the decisions being made and has an active and final say in making them, where appropriate and possible, and providing emotional support to the patient.

In medical crisis situations, insurance will be an issue that will have to be addressed, though usually not until after the acute crisis has passed. Insurance companies do not want to pay large medical bills, and will seek excuses to deny claims. Some examples of denial causes include being in a 'riot,' e.g. This is one of the reasons why controlling the narrative early is so crucial, but also why giving only limited information that supports our narrative is equally important. Make certain that the patient does not leave the medical care facility without a briefing on aftercare, prescriptions, location to pick up prescriptions, and instructions for taking prescriptions or changing bandages, follow-up appointments, insurance expectations, billing expectations, and more.

7. Information Security

The best information security is figuring out what not to say. You don't have to be secure about things you don't share, talk about in potentially surveilled spaces, or write down. So don't. Assume everything else is being surveilled, even if it is encrypted. Never write down anything you wouldn't be able to defend in a court; it may be read back to you in one someday. If it doesn't need to be said, don't say it.

For things about which you do need to share and discuss, but which still need to be secured, identify and prepare to use proper tools before a crisis emerges. At the time of this writing, the Signal app is the state of the art in end-to-end- encrypted communication for cell phones, but should still not be considered truly secure. Nothing should ever be written down that would damage a legal case or the success of the team.

7.1. Social Media

The best practices for social media in a crisis include locking down or deactivating all social media accounts that can be connected to a physical individual. This includes all facebook, twitter, instagram, and snapchat accounts that use real names, or names that can be connected to real people. Locking down can be a temporary measure taken until the crisis passes. Not everyone knows how to lock down their social media accounts, and social media services routinely change their privacy and security options, so any advice we offered here would rapidly become obsolete.

Doxxing

Doxxing is the process of researching a person and releasing as much personal and damaging information about them in public. This tool has been used by the right and the left, and is not unique to a political tendency. Doxxing is primarily used to humiliate, and to put pressure on the employers of the individuals doxxed to fire them. It can be used for far more dangerous activities as well.

The most important thing one can do to prevent doxxing is to maintain secure information control prior to the crisis. Set your social media settings to the most private setting possible, make certain you are only connected on social media to people who actually have met and trust, and don't share your personal information or the personal information of your family members online. Opt out of services which allow people to research your personal data, such as Family Tree Now. Crash Override Network is a good source for preventing doxxing.

Swatting

Swatting is an extremely dangerous tactic used primarily by the right wing, especially the alt-right tendencies that emerged in online boards such as 4chan and 8chan. In swatting, the police department is sent to the home of the target with a report of extremely dangerous activity, of the sort that would result in a SWAT team being sent to the house. At the very least, such a visit is deeply unnerving. It can be deadly. If you suspect you are in danger of being swatted, the current prescribed practice is to call your local police department, explain your concern and the justification for your concern, and to request that the police department call your phone when sending a SWAT team. This may not be an option for those who refuse police engagement on principle or caution.

8. Financial Security

This is fundamentally about fundraising for the individual or groups involved. Most of the relevant information is in the description of the Financial Security Fundraiser role in the chapter on forming the committee.

The fundraiser should work closely with the media liaison to craft a straightforward and public-facing statement for the fundraiser. Additionally, it is important that the specific uses to which the fundraiser will be put are stated clearly (and adhered to!), and that a secondary source for any excess funds is also designated.

When we created a fundraiser for the Fellow Worker shot in Seattle, we made it clear that all funds would first go to his medical and legal costs, then to any replacement funds for lost income and work, and then any additional funds would go to support the legal defense of those facing felony charges associated with January 20th (2017) protests.

That fundraiser and its text can be seen here: <https://www.crowdrise.com/medical-fundraiser-for-iww-and-gdc-member-shot-in-seattle/fundraiser/gdcsteeringcommittee>

In setting up the fundraiser, consider making it possible to donate anonymously, or to anonymize the donor information. Our political opponents will try to gather information on donors from our fundraising pages and harass people.

Finally, make certain you issue frequent updates on the fundraiser page, thank yous, and a statement when the fundraiser is closed.

9. Media - Intervene to control the narrative

Media cycles are notoriously short currently. This means that very few media outlets will cover a story for more than a day or two. Even local news outlets will often do a single small followup story to a local event at best. Once a narrative has stuck in the public's mind, it is very hard to dislodge. This means there is a very small window of time to get our narrative to regular media outlets, who remain the strongest and most effective shapers of public opinion.

The importance of acting quickly and confidently in managing a crisis cannot be overstated. That said, it is better not to act at all than to act in public and make a serious mistake.

January 2017, a Fellow Worker and Defender was shot on the campus of the University of Washington at a protest of Alt-Right provocateur and white nationalist Milo Yiannopoulos. He spent most of the evening de-escalating the often aggressive physical confrontations between anti and pro-Milo protesters and counter-protesters. At around 8:30 P.M. he was shot in the stomach by a person who had come to attend the Milo event as a supporter of Milo and Donald Trump. When the shooter turned himself in nearly five hours later, he claimed he had shot our member in self-defense, believing him to be a 'white supremacist.' This was an incredible claim to begin with, but lost all credence when we learned days later that he had been communicating with Milo via social media prior to the shooting.

However, this story almost failed to emerge. Early mainstream newspaper reports took the report of the shooter on its face, and began to characterize our Fellow Workers as a potential white supremacist: a case of the alt-right calling the antifascists nazis. We attribute the success in early attempts to intervene in the media narrative to a quickly written and published press release that was simultaneously posted to the iww.org webpage, the twincitiesgdc.org webpage, and output as a professional-looking press release PDF document which was sent to media outlets.

A more famous case provides a negative example:

Think about the famous case of the woman who sued McDonald's because her coffee was too hot. This was a narrative put forward by McDonald's itself, but which quickly became widespread because it drew on common-sense assumptions. However, the coffee in that case was between 180-190F, the woman who

spilled the coffee in her pelvic area received third degree burns, and required skin graft surgery for recovery.

Getting your version of events into the public quickly is often critical for the long-term success of the management of this crisis.

9.1. Press releases and interviews

Additional tips for preparing and presenting your narrative to the media;

- **Write up your narrative first.** You must write it down or you will not know the words you mean to use. It's important that the original narrative be general and broad enough that individual details that emerge later won't destroy your credibility. This can happen in situations where you tell everything you think is the truth. This is an important reason to not offer details that are not relevant to your narrative, and which you cannot confirm. Never speculate.
- Once you've written a narrative for your crisis management, make sure to **share it with the whole team**, so that everyone is on the same page. Have the team ask questions of you for clarification. Revise the narrative.
- In preparing to speak with reporters, **condense the written narrative down to 3 sentences**, which express everything central to the story.
- **Repeat those 3 sentences until you are sick of every last word.**
- **Answer the questions you wish the reporter had asked, not the ones they ask.**
- **Don't worry about telling the reporter you can't or won't answer a question. That's normal.**
- **Avoid lots of pronouns when talking to the press;** this helps avoid misquotations when they edit. So try to say "The I.W.W." instead of "it," even if you just mentioned the I.W.W. a second ago and it's obvious to you and the reporter what "it" would be.
- **Don't let the reporter provoke you into giving unplanned quotes.** That's what they will try to do.

9.2. Formatting and releasing press releases

You probably won't have a template for a press release, but set one up soon. If it's time sensitive, just open a text file in any word processing document.

Include the following in this order:

1. NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION
2. "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE"
3. Spokesperson's name

4. Spokesperson's phone
5. Spokesperson's email
6. Byline ("PLACE, DATE – ") as in a newspaper article
7. A snappy short first sentence or two that describe the most central fact of your press release
8. The rest of the press release language
9. end with three hashtags: ###

When writing a press release:

- **Try to write it like a newspaper article would write and sound.** This is important, because the less work the reporter does, the more likely they are to simply run with whole chunks of your text. If you pay special attention in editing to the sentence around our name, for instance, they might get it right.
- **Write in short sentences.** Use an online editing service to evaluate the 'grade level' you are writing at, and attempt to bring the writing level to a 9th grade level or below. See for instance <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>
- **Show, don't tell.** Don't tell us someone is a good person, tell us a story about what makes them good. Nobody believes the first. People have a hard time not believing the second.
- **Avoid all passive sentences.** Make sure that a person does every action you write about.
- **Avoid all adverbs.** Editors see adverbs and read "ideology." Adverbs are a replacement for an argument or for factual detail.
- **Avoid most adjectives.** "Color" language is okay in grabbing reader's attention, but should be strongly limited to un-contentious aspects of the press release.
- **Make certain to output as a PDF file and mail to all the newsrooms you can.** Most use email submission these days. PDF files are standard, and many will ignore web-submitted and online press releases, unless accompanied by a PDF. For some reason, they currently see a PDF file as some sort of indication of seriousness.
- **Send the PDF press release version to specific email addresses.** Try to send each email address an individual email; it makes it far less likely that your email will be pushed into the spam box, or that the reporter will assume someone else is working on it already.

We encourage readers to examine the examples of press releases relating to the shooting of our fellow worker in Seattle on January 20, 2017, which can be found at the following links:

- <https://twincitiesgdc.org/2017/01/22/seattleshootingpr/>
- <https://twincitiesgdc.org/2017/01/25/seattleshootingpr2/>
- <https://twincitiesgdc.org/2017/01/29/university-administrations-that-host-alt-right-events-risk-our-safety-yiannopoulos-routinely-incites-violence-at-campus-events/>

9.3. Social media accounts

Have social media accounts set up, and the passwords known and/or easily available, prior to any crisis. Remember that things you post with a photo get *far* more engagement and attention than things without a photo.

If you don't have social media accounts set up, try to set them up quickly, concentrating on

1. Facebook
2. Twitter

Write directly and in short sentences. Try to imitate newspapers.

9.4. Weblogs

Having a professional-looking weblog where you can host both html and pdf versions of your press release will increase the range of your press release, and improve your ability to respond effectively to other news narratives.

10. Legal security

In a crisis situation, we may be in the position of supporting a legal defendant, a party to prosecution, or refusing cooperation with state prosecutions while demanding other forms of accountability.

Quite frequently we will be in the position of having to support a person facing legal charges. In these cases, the most important immediate advice that must be followed is to make everyone understand that **snitching makes everyone lose**, and to **refuse to speak to the police without the presence of a lawyer**. Once a lawyer has been retained, the lawyers can help formulate a legal and public relations strategy.

If you are facing charges, it is *literally* illegal for anything you say to a police officer to be used to help you in a court of law. It will be ruled 'hearsay.' Instead, *anything you say can only be used against you in a court*. There is literally nothing you can say that will improve your situation, regardless of your innocence. Therefore, *you must remain silent until you have had a chance to consult with a lawyer in private*. Invoke your Fifth Amendment rights and simply repeat like a broken record that you invoke your fifth amendment rights are refuse to answer questions without the advice of counsel.

As soon as possible, get explicit commitments from all involved to behave similarly - no one should speak with the police without legal counsel. Some may even be tempted to snitch, believing that the consequences will be limited, or that the other person can more readily handle those consequences. These beliefs are rarely confirmed.

There are a few resources online to help advise radicals on seeking and engaging with legal counsel, and how to develop a legal strategy that simultaneously address needs that are personal, political, and legal. At the time of this writing, we strongly recommend that those in need of legal support read the free online book by the Tilted Scales Legal Collective, titled *The Criminal Legal System for Radicals: Setting and Balancing Personal, Political, and Legal Goals*. That book can be accessed at: <https://tiltedscalescollective.org/full-text/>

11. Plan a strategic response

Political security primarily refers to the reputation of the individual and the organization, but also includes legal defense. It is vital that organizations take rapid, bold, and forceful stands in support of our members and in defense of our organizations - anything else appears weak, and while legal advice might push us into a mode of retreat and silence, a political defense strategy demands that we place our narrative in the public domain, and see our crisis as also an opportunity to consolidate our political positions, improve our local and international support, and strengthen our various abilities. Dealing competently with a crisis can be a deeply morale-building exercise. Failing to deal competently with a crisis can destroy an organization, friendships, and trust. A political strategy attempts to defend both the individual and the group as a whole, and the politics of that group.

In addition to media interventions and legal defense, political security will almost certainly include organizing an action of some sort.

When our fellow worker was shot in Seattle on January 20, 2017, we had to quickly intervene to demonstrate that he was not the white supremacist (which had been claimed by the right-wing person who admitted to shooting him), but instead was the victim of a white supremacist (see earlier anecdote in the media chapter). In this way, we intervened to provide political security to our fellow worker, maintain public sympathy, and thereby maintain our ability to fundraise for his medical and legal costs.

However, there were serious political security needs for the I.W.W., the G.D.C., and the anti-fascist and anti-racist movement in the Pacific Northwest in general. The Pacific Northwest has long been a traditional heartland for white supremacy and white supremacist organizing. The murderous attack on a public anti-fascist in the context of Trump's inauguration day, at an event of white nationalist Milo Yiannopoulos, was deeply demoralizing and scary to everyone. Retreat and hiding is a reasonable individual response to such fear, but it is a lousy political response, and continued silence could destroy the I.W.W. branch, which had just been rechartered and had a lot of members who had joined after the November election.

In addition to the media and legal interventions, a strategic response organizing committee was struck to identify the needs and goals, and the strategies and tactics necessary to accomplish them. Given the relative inexperience of the members of the Seattle group, outside assistance (primarily from the G.D.C. and the Twin Cities, Whatcom-Skagit, and Olympia branches of the I.W.W.

in particular) was crucial in providing morale, concrete assistance for physical and information security. It is this author's assessment that without such outside assistance - which was very controversial in discussions within the General Executive Board (G.E.B.) of the I.W.W. - it is likely that the nascent I.W.W. effort, and the brand-new G.D.C. effort in Seattle, would both have experienced serious and perhaps permanent blows to their organizing. Worse, I suspect that not-responding to this attack would embolden the very present white supremacist organizations in the Northwest, and terrify many anti-racists into retreat and silence.

A. What is the G.D.C.?

A.1. Preamble to the General Defense Committee's Bylaws

The aims of this organization shall be to provide defense and relief to members of the working class who are being persecuted for their activity in the class struggle.

Coordinating our efforts will enable the General Defense Committee to oppose the vicious onslaught of the master class with a powerful defense, especially when labor is engaged in industrial strife.

It has been found in past labor struggles that the lack of adequate defense has resulted in many of the most active fighters for labor being arrested and imprisoned for long periods of time or being legally murdered by the employing class.

It shall be the purpose of the General Defense Committee to aid those who find themselves persecuted by the powers that be in their struggle for justice and freedom.

It shall also be the purpose of the General Defense Committee to publish and distribute literature exposing the false and reactionary propaganda of the master class.

By organizing the many and centralizing their efforts in each instance, labor will be given the protection of the entire working class, thereby making an injury to one the concern of all.

A.2. Goals of the G.D.C.

The G.D.C. of the I.W.W. wants most to provide support to any member of the working class who finds themselves in legal trouble due to their involvement in the class war.

Any member of the I.W.W. or G.D.C. in good standing may petition the G.D.C. for direct aid in their legal defense on charges resulting from protests, picketing, or other acts related to job action or activist causes. This aid may include bail, bond, or legal aid, and may take the form of a grant or a no interest loan. Members may also rest assured of solidarity from the organization, including motions of support, letters writing, and public education as to the case (or cases) in question.

Non-members of the I.W.W. or G.D.C. who find themselves embattled with the law may also expect solidarity from the organization, including motions of support, letters writing, etc.

A.3. Preamble to Twin Cities G.D.C. Bylaws

The aim of the General Defense Committee (G.D.C.) is to provide defense and solidarity to members of the working class under attack. We provide these through the provision and maintenance of legal and financial support, and through attempts to innovate new forms of defense of the working class as a whole. The G.D.C. publicly promotes the vision of the I.W.W. and the creation of worker-run industry to the entire working class.

Effective worker organizations will face oppression from the master class, and have been effectively shut down and marginalized through lawsuits, imprisonment, and through the institution of neighborhood terror by police. Some attacks on worker organization involve courts, police, and prisons. We must secure defense against such attacks, but do not imagine that legal and financial defense alone are sufficient.

Some of the most effective weapons of the master class are to divide the working class according to unevenly shared oppressions of race, sex, gender, ability, sexual attraction, religion, nationality, or language. While the I.W.W. organizes against such divisions in the workplace, the G.D.C. both defends workers in legal trouble, and takes action against such oppressions, in ways that attempt to strategically link anti-oppression struggles to worker organization. As such, we see the G.D.C.'s mission partly as defense of active organized workers already in our union, and partly as outreach to currently under-represented members of the working class.

It shall be the purpose of the General Defense Committee to aid those who find themselves persecuted by the powers that be in their struggle for justice and freedom. It shall also be the purpose of the General Defense Committee to publish and distribute literature exposing the false and reactionary propaganda of the master class.

By organizing the many and centralizing their efforts in each instance, labor will be given the protection of the entire working class, thereby making an injury to one the concern of all.

A.4. Contact the Twin Cities G.D.C.

email: tc-gdc@iww.org

wordpress: <https://twincitiesgdc.org>

facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TC.GDC>

twitter: @TCGDC

B. Unionism and Anti-fascism: Statement Opposing All Oppression from the Twin Cities G.D.C. Local 14

1. ANY SUCCESSFUL WORKER REVOLUTION WILL REQUIRE PARTICIPATION FROM DIVERSE MEMBERS OF THE WORKING CLASS, CURRENTLY DIVIDED BY MANY OPPRESSIONS

We fight against capitalism. We do so because capitalism is organized theft based on hierarchy. We unionize because fighting this authoritarian theft can be done most successfully in the workplace, at the point of production. In unionizing we face many challenges, from creating strategies and tactics to accomplish our goals, as well as maintaining morale, fighting spirit, and solidarity with each other.

One of the most difficult challenges the working class faces is that of oppressive social divisions. We may be of a single class, but we are not the same as a result. In addition to experiencing the oppressions of our class, we have differing experiences of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, anti-semitism and Islamphobia, along with other types of oppressions. Some of us experience privilege on the basis of our race, sex, gender, or religion, while others among us experience oppression on precisely the same grounds.

The ruling classes know this, of course. It is one of their favorite strategies for destroying organized workers: divide and conquer. Many of these oppressions exist in starkest relief in America's massive prison-industrial system, where wardens encourage and enforce racial segregation and violence among prisoners, precisely as a system of maintaining control. These forms of control through oppression are not limited to prisons, of course. We see and experience them in our daily lives, and in our workplaces as well.

To maintain solidarity with all workers requires that we maintain explicit solidarity with workers on the diverse grounds of their oppression. Our revolution cannot maintain a merely minimal, workerist, program which concentrates on the oppression of labor and leaves other problems solely to those workers who face them. Given the still relatively homogenous makeup of the Industrial Workers of the World, to do so sends a clear message to the working class experiencing such oppressions that the class struggle and their struggles against racism, gendered, or religious oppression are separate issues. If you were already struggling to keep the basics of your life together in the face of constant attacks on your person, would you be interested in taking on another massive but unconnected struggle in your workplace? By pointing out the ways in which struggles against all oppression support

and further our collective freedom from class and other oppressions, we gain strength as a union.

Neither have we proceeded, historically, with a minimal program of workplace organization that leaves other oppressions unchallenged. The Industrial Workers of the World were founded in 1905 in part precisely to overcome the divisions of race, sex, religion, language, nationality, etc., among the working class. Militantly in favor of the organization of the entire working class, Wobblies quickly turned toward the power of young women in garment factories, racially-mixed work-gangs on the waterfronts, and nationally diverse immigrant groups. The I.W.W. took on the Ku Klux Klan and other racist organizations that attempted to divide the class on the grounds of race. More recently, some I.W.W. branches have begun to successfully undermine the divisions of oppressions based on gendered identities in ways that seem truly revolutionary.

2. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM IS NOT AN ELECTIVE STRUGGLE.

The notion that organized workers can choose to avoid struggle against fascists is peculiar and ahistorical. Fascism is a modern political ideology, much like marxism or what we might term contemporary anarchism. Fascism responds to the conditions of modern state capitalism, coordinating the desires and resentments of sections of the working class with the aims and desires of the capitalist bosses. Some historical fascisms have been pronouncedly 'proletarian,' appealing primarily to members of the working class who have many privileges, but are genuinely oppressed on the basis of their position as workers in capitalism. Early German National Socialism (until the Night of Long Knives) was colored by a conflict within the fascist camps between such proletarian fascism and an aristocratic fascism (which eventually triumphed). Contemporary Greek Fascism is far more proletarian than German fascism was, focusing on issues of employment, food security, and neighborhood safety. The current appeal of Golden Dawn fascists to working class Greeks is precisely on the basis of their opposition to capitalism's depredations in Greece. The danger, of course, is that the primary targets of fascist groups are not the capitalists, but other victims of capitalism who are easy to attack with impunity: immigrants, racial minorities, queers, and religious minorities.

Historically, the appeal of fascism's anti-capitalist rhetoric has been far more successful among the working classes than we might prefer to acknowledge. In the early days of the National Socialist regime in Germany, many former communists, anarchists, and unionists (to leave aside the Social Democrats entirely, who were a lost cause from the beginning, it seems) transferred their loyalties to the National 'Socialists' quite quickly. Since they were already in power and promised fixes to such bread and butter issues as food security and employment, these former radicals were content to see what the new ideology of fascism could offer. Those workers who were incapable of making such accommodations such as Jews, queers, publicly-known leftists, etc., had to flee or go underground.

Fascists are not the same thing as capitalists, and may share many of our left-wing

criticisms of capitalism, though their solution is more hierarchy and authority, and their preferred solutions are gangs of paramilitary violence (what a recent sociologist of Fascism terms an ideology of 'transcendent violence'). From the point of view of a genuine worker's organization, fascism may be seen as an attempt to destroy the class solidarity that is our strongest weapon in the war against capitalism, by mobilizing existing oppressions outside of capitalism to divide the working class.

Moreover, historically, the recent resurgence of the I.W.W. owes a great deal to contemporary anti-fascist struggle, including locals such as Portland, where anti-fascist struggle led directly to increased workplace organizing and worker militancy.

We don't get to choose our enemies. We were born into the capitalist world, ruled by bosses and cops. Our enemies in many ways determine the grounds on which we organize ourselves. We cannot choose to ignore fascists, because they won't ignore us. But we can develop strategies and tactics to suppress them, weaken their power, and even possibly recruit confused members of the working class to a truly revolutionary and anti-oppressive vision of the future.

3. ANY ORGANIZATION SUCCESSFULLY STRUGGLING FOR THE ENTIRE WORKING CLASS WILL NECESSARILY HAVE TO CONFRONT FASCISM.

We must always remember that most people do not currently share our hatred of authority and command, and many will be quite happy to accept a proposed authoritarian solution to their oppressions, as long as its negative effects are felt by members of differently oppressed groups. Given that fascists recruit their most active members from the same working class that unions do (while paramilitary violence by gangs of young men is a particularly fascist strategy, you rarely find members of the elite classes among them, for instance), any anti-oppression workers' organization will necessarily need to distinguish itself from fascists in a way that makes it clear that our organizations have a better chance of succeeding against capitalist oppression than do the fascists.

Fascists have historically been used as shock troops by the employing classes. This includes fascists of the proletarian variety, who seem to be motivated by the idea that after the installation of a just world through transcendent violence and purification of 'impurities,' their internal merit will be recognized and rewarded. Wherever organized workers have made gains that genuinely worry the boss class as a class, that class will reach out to fascist paramilitary groups and deploy violence against the workers. This violence may take place in workplaces (Golden Dawn's constant attempts to take over Greek hospitals, e.g.) but at least as frequently takes place in neighborhoods (Golden Dawn's charity works for "Greeks Only," and their provision of "security" and "immigration" to neighborhoods, in which they attack immigrants or non-Greeks who dare show their faces in public.

Any workers' organization that fails to recognize the potential threat of fascists to both the solidarity of their own membership, and to that membership's physical and social safety,

will fail to meet the fascist threat of the capitalists when we encounter it.

4. ANY ORGANIZATION THAT DOES NOT PLAN FOR FASCIST ATTACKS ON ITSELF, OR ITS MEMBERS, WILL BE UNPREPARED FOR SUCH ATTACKS.

In the Organizer Training of the I.W.W., we emphasize the acronym A.E.I.O.U.: Agitation, Education, Inoculation, Organization, and Unionization. It's an excellent model for organizing, and implicated in many of the union's recent organizing successes. I want to focus here on the word 'Inoculation.' What we mean by inoculation in organizer training is that workers must consider the responses of the bosses to their attempts to better their working conditions, and prepare for those responses. If we were to encourage a handful of employees to march on their boss without adequate preparation, or helping them think through the boss' response, we would be guilty of the worst kind of idealism: suggesting that merely because something is 'right,' it is bound to be successful. Instead, we continually train ourselves, each other, and improve our skills in organization, and prepare for the boss' response. We play a chess game where we must predict the boss' various possible responses, and prepare for each of them.

If overcoming non-capitalist oppressions is crucial to the building and maintenance of working class solidarity, as argued in point one above, then we must prepare for this. We cannot wait for oppressed groups not already a part of our union to raise these issues themselves, but must join with all oppressed groups in fighting against their oppressions. We must also actively prepare for such struggles, and the responses to those struggles. We have too many union martyrs in our history, dead or languishing in prison as a result of our inability to properly plan and protect them when the bosses came back at us, whether it was with Pinkertons or fascist gangs. We remember them every November (In November, We Remember), but we betray these martyrs' memories and struggle if we value their martyrdom, rather than their organizing. Instead of valuing the heroic loss of life and freedom, let's protect the heroic organizing through which we will accomplish the free world.

If unions inevitably face oppression and violent attacks on our solidarity with each other, whenever we become a real threat to the bosses, people who experience other oppressions in addition to capitalist oppression face even more. The number of attacks on queers, racial minorities, religious minorities, and the homeless in our own metro area of the Twin Cities is horrendous. These are attacks experienced by the working class.

5. INTELLIGENT STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM & OPPRESSION MAY SERVE AS NOTICE OF SERIOUSNESS TO THOSE COMMUNITIES, AND HELP RECRUITMENT.

We cannot control the fascists' attacks on us. And we must assume, given the consistent history of employer's use of fascist gangs to destroy and fight worker organization, that

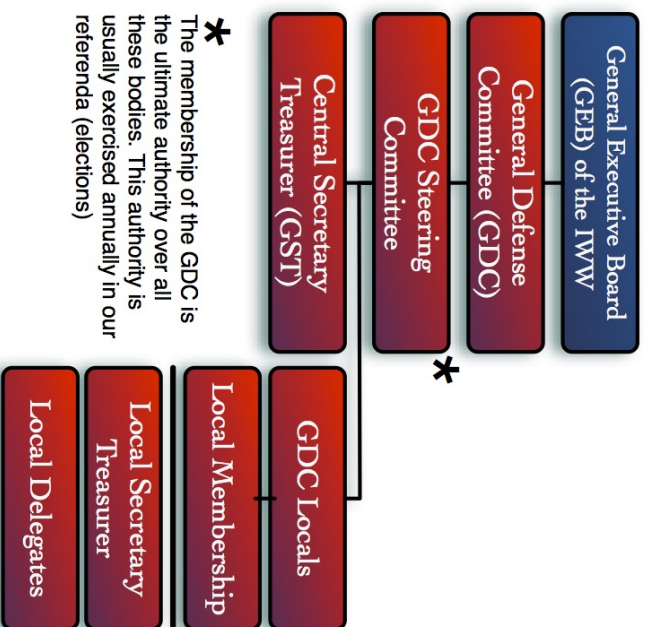
they will eventually attack us. They will do so, because we are going to be effective in workplace organizing, and will do so at the behest of the bosses. We can, however, use struggle against all the various forms of oppression that currently divide the working class, to consolidate and expand our vision of a workers' world free of hatred, violence, and authority.

Far from scaring away members of the working class who experience the greatest forms of oppression and intersectional combinations of oppression, public struggle by the union against racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, anti-semitism and Islamophobia, may actually serve positive recruitment functions. The history of Business Unions in American is partly a history of unions themselves destroying the solidarity of the working class, preferring white, cis, male, straight, English-Speaking, skilled, and Protestant workers to all others, and rewarding that narrow class of workers just enough to keep the oppressions alive within the working class itself. The I.W.W. has always, from its founding moments, opposed this preferential strategy. Public struggle against such oppressions beyond the workplace itself clearly distinguishes the I.W.W. from such oppressive strategies, which many associate as a union norm, and announces that we will fight for all workers.

C. Organization Charts



General Defense Committee of the IWW



* The membership of the GDC is the ultimate authority over all these bodies. This authority is usually exercised annually in our referenda (elections)



This organizational chart of the GDC is not official, but created as a service of the publication committee of the Twin Cities General Defense Committee, Local 14. This chart is also not complete, but only describes 'top-level' organizational bodies. Last updated 15 December 2016