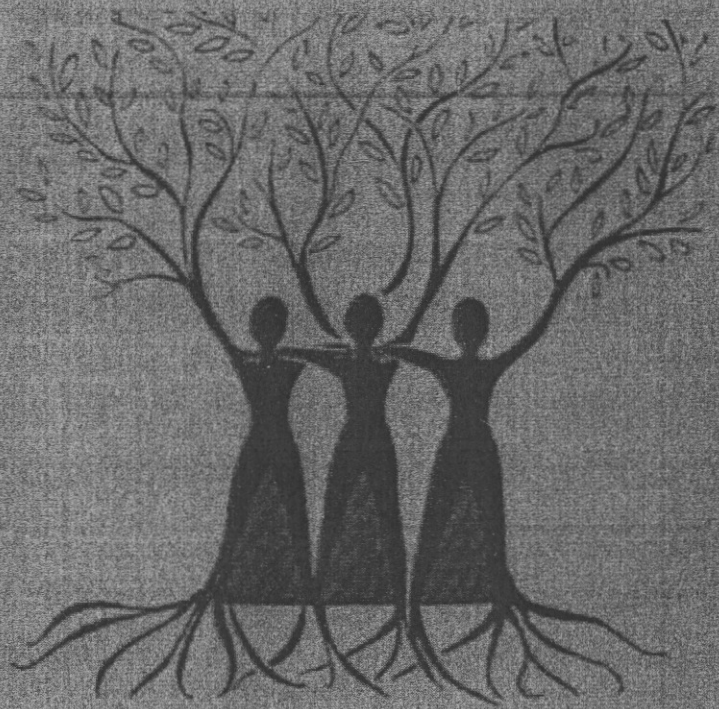


BUILDING VIOLENCE-FREE COMMUNITIES



**A WORKSHOP BY THE ESCUELA POPULAR
NORTEÑA**

Building Violence-Free Communities: a Workshop

[Time: this workshop can be done in several ways. You can take two days and go straight through with breaks for lunch and for short breaks. You can also do the sections in the order suggested but on a morning or afternoon every weekend, every other weekend, or once a month. There are advantages to each. You also know the time constraints of your group. You may want to provide something to drink and cookies. Provide a sugar free alternative for diabetics.]

MORNING

Setting the tone [10 minutes]

When women arrive the room is alive with music, poems, images that touch on questions of violence. *[See the end of the booklet for suggestions.]*

Women walk around the room looking at the words and images. Look particularly at the quotes by Alice Walker on loving big and loving small and the quotes by June Jordan on loving.] *[10 minutes]*

Getting to Know Each Other: introductions [30 minutes]

Tell everyone your name and what community you come from, live in, or identify with. Name one thing you like and one thing you dislike about your community.

Looking at violence in our daily lives [1 hour]

Think of yourself and other women in your family, neighborhood, workplace, school, or anywhere where Women of Color find ourselves face-to-face with violence. Tell the group about one particular situation of violence directed at you or that you witnessed. What violence is being inflicted? Who is doing it? What are the circumstances? Is there someone with you or with the person who is being abused? Where is the violence taking place? Were you able to do something about it?



Three different moments of dealing with violence [30 minutes]

Consider these three different moments of dealing with violence.

Discuss how they are different.

In the violent situation: you (or another woman of color) are in the middle of a violent situation. The violence is happening right then and there.

Preparing for violence: you are not in the immediate situation of violence. Because violence against us is such an important part of our lives, you are preparing as to how you can meet it. You may be expecting or anticipating violence or may think it is important to be ready. Just like when one thinks about what one would do if a thief enters the house or what to do if there is a fire, you think about what you might do, what strategies you might use, what resources are available to you, to whom or where can you turn.

Conceiving and planning how to eradicate violence against Women of Color. You are working with others not just on meeting violence case by case, but on creating a violence free society for Women of Color. That involves long-term planning, working with many people, working on how people relate to each other, working on how our communities need to change, on how the health care system needs to change, etc.



Preparing ourselves to deal with violence against oneself or another Woman of Color [4 hours: this section is divided into four sections: preparing for a situation of violence (1hr); the movement against violence against women (1hr), the movement against police brutality and prisons (1hr), conclusions (two 30 minute discussions)]

We have already discussed being in the middle of the violent situation as we talked about situations of face-to-face violence against a Woman of Color face-to-face. We will now move on to discussion of preparation.

In preparing for a situation of violence, either alone or in conversation with one or more women, consider the following: [1 hour]

What resources do I/we have?

What strategies do I/we have to deal with the situation?

It is in discussions like this that Women of Color come up with many good suggestions that are worth remembering and sharing with other women. As we come up with our own, let us also consider some strategies other Women of Color have created and let us think of our strategies as to be added to this list:

***Women notice that in violent situations they learned things about themselves that they can tell other women about. They can learn about what happens to women in violence (whether they freeze up, for example) and discuss what to do about it.**

***Women also learn things about their abusers that they can share with each other. For example, jealous men who batter women tend to be very conscious about whether you show up at the time you said you would. Women can discuss what they learned and whether some actions can follow from that.**

***Women have began groups with friends and talk among each other about the details of their love relations. This breaks a taboo not to talk about intimate relations and it breaks the tendency in women to isolate themselves from their friends when they get in romantic relations. Both of these tend to put women in very vulnerable positions in situations of violence. They cannot see it coming, they don't have anyone to talk about it, they do not have anyone to call for assistance, etc.**

***Women knock of each other's doors when they know violence is going on and shout "Fire, get out of your rooms" loudly.**

***Women write up the names of rapists and assailants on public spaces.**

***Women form women patrols**

LUNCH BREAK OR BREAK FOR THE DAY



AFTERNOON

Two movements against violence [2 hours]

We have considered several strategies and we have looked at the resources we have at our disposal or that we can create with our friends, family, neighbors to deal with the presence of violence in our lives. This is a discussion that needs to be ongoing, organized by each one of us, so that we can stand our best chance. So, there is every reason for us to continue this discussion. But at this time we want to look at the two organized movements against violence to see what they might offer us as we are preparing to meet everyday violences, large and small.

Since we are preparing to both meet violence and to prevent it in our particular situations as Women of Color, we want to see whether these movements not only address violence but take Women of Color and our situations into account.

We have two pictures that we will look at in discussing each of the movements. We will analyze the pictures, looking for helpful things as we are preparing to meet and prevent violence against us

The Movement Against Violence Against Women [1 hour]

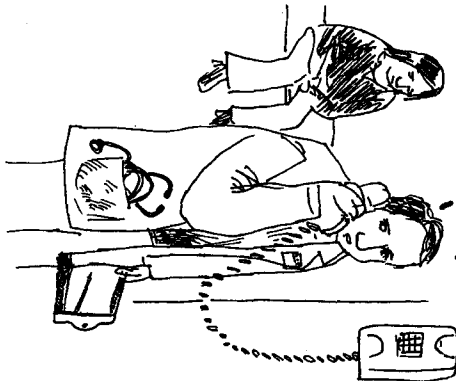
Talk about what you see in the picture. What resources and strategies do you see enacted in the picture? Are these good for preparing to meet or prevent violence against us? Do the resources or strategies offered by the movement against violence against women address the violence against us successfully?

[Some of the resources this movement offers include shelters, legal advocacy, accompanying you to a hospital (case management), hotlines, cop intervention, restraining orders, taking you to the hospital to check for semen or to treat injuries from battering, courts, support groups, co-counseling, self defense, information, etc.]

BREAK [10 minutes]



I have a patient here who seems to have been battered. She has multiple bruises and internal injuries.



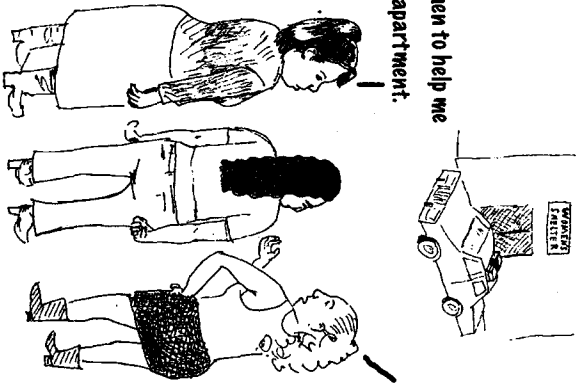
How do you plead?



I had no other way out. He was going to kill me and my children. I want to plead self-defense.

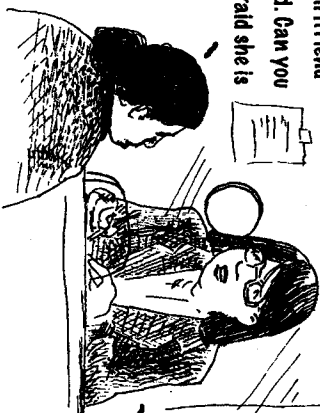
As your legal advocate my advice is to plead self-defense. Your best bet is to plead insanity. Either way say "not guilty."

I need these women to help me find a job and an apartment.



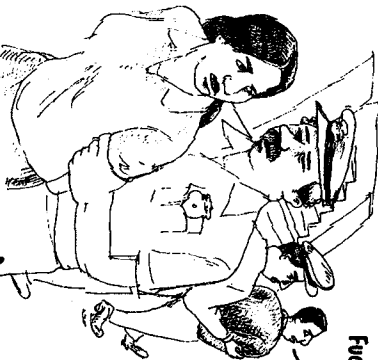
¡Ay Dios mio! The police is here! Yo no puedo entrar or they'll deport me. I can't go in. ¿Que voy a hacer?

I need help. My girlfriend beats me real bad. Can you help me? I am afraid she is going to kill me.



They tell me this place has a curfew so that we whores can't go to work, and on top of that, the cops are all over this place. But I don't have anywhere else to go.

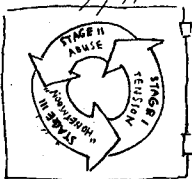
Why are you arresting me? I'm all black and blue and you're arresting me? I call for help and this is what I get?



Fucking bitch.

Shut up or you'll get "Resisting Arrest."

You need a restraining order. That is the first step in building a case against her. Call them if she comes to your place, and show them the order.



The Movement Against the Prisons and the Prison Industrial Complex and the Movement Against Police Brutality. Both movements deal with the criminalization of communities of color. [1 hour]

Talk about what you see in the picture. What resources and strategies do you see enacted in the picture? Are these good for preparing to meet or prevent violence against us? Do the resources or strategies offered by the movements against the prisons and the prison industrial complex and against police brutality address the violence against us successfully?

[Some of the resources these movements offer include information about abuse by police all over the country, information and connections about racial profiling, information about the weapons and technology used by the cops, stories of police brutality, strategies of how to combat/resist (direct action, community alternatives), cultural work against violence including graphics, hip hop, poetry, analysis of how the Prison Industrial Complex affects people of color, critiques of government policies and actions (war on drugs), access to lawyers, organizing and education around prison rape, analysis of the contemporary introduction of slavery conditions in prisons, etc.]

Conclusions [1 hour]

Conclusion from considering the movements: are we in a double bind?
[25 minutes]

If we see that neither movement addresses sufficiently the violence against us, we find ourselves in a double bind. Neither movement takes up violence against Women of Color.

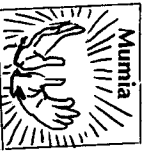
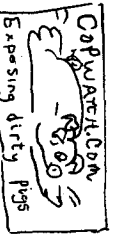
Is it the case that as we look at the movement against violence against women for resources and strategies in preparing to deal with and to prevent violence against us, we find that it does not offer things that are helpful to Women of Color and many that are harmful to us? Is it that they have not prepared solutions or preventions with Women of Color in mind?

Is it the case that as we turn to the other movements, we do not find resources and strategies to deal with and prevent violence against Women of Color and that they do not deal with violent masculinity sufficiently? Is it that in seeing the violence that racism has always thrown in the way of people of color, they do not see Women of Color sufficiently and thus do not see the violence directed at us sufficiently?

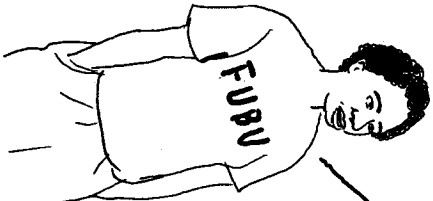
Abolish
Prisons



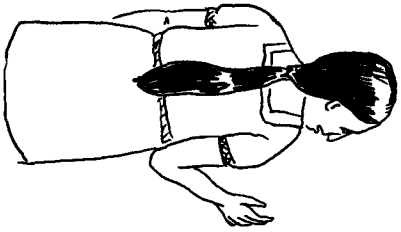
stop
killer
cops



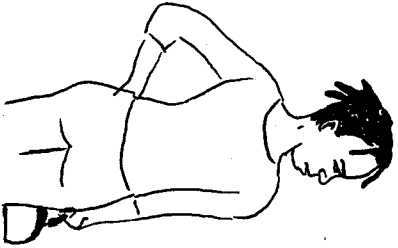
You guys know all about the legal system. Do you know what will happen to me if I injure or kill my batterer?



I have no papers. Will I be deported if I call the cops in an incest case?



What are the chances my white boss will be convicted of raping me?



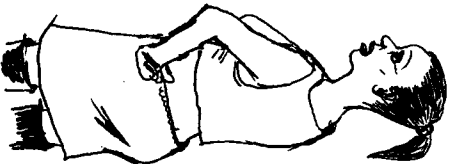
Are you guys doing some work on violent masculinity in our community? My lover beats me and I want to know if you are doing work with men that can help me?



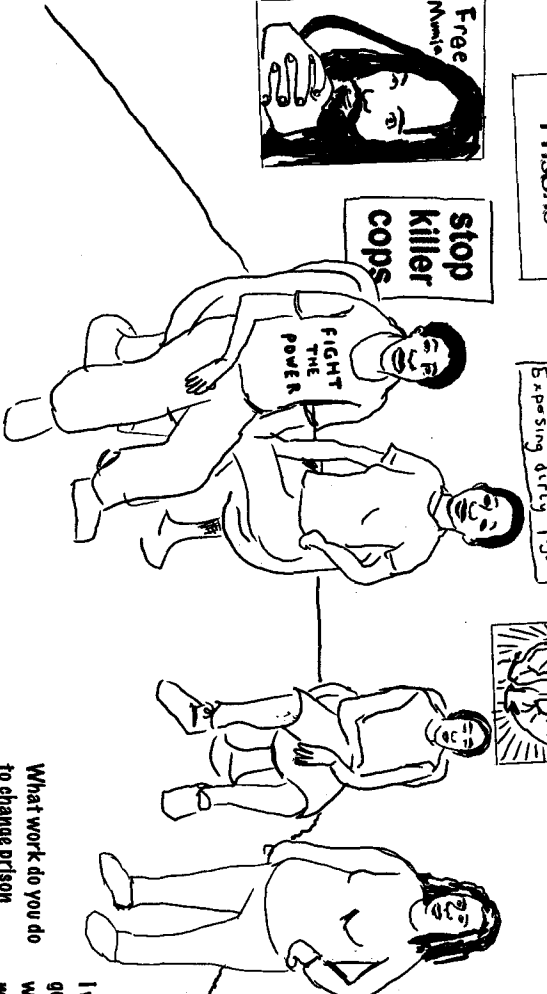
What work do you do to change prison conditions for women of color?



I was raped by a cop at gun-point. He showed up when a John was beating me. What will prison be like for me if I am convicted of killing him?



What does your organization do about men of color beating and incesting women of color?



Conclusion from thinking about preparation [25 minutes]

As we thought about preparing ourselves to deal with and to prevent violence against us, we may have seen that

Many situations don't have any solutions at this time

Many situations don't have good enough solutions

We are left with the violence and dealing with it

We are left with loving small, loving others and ourselves unable to love big

MORNING

Loving Big/Loving Small [2 hours]

One way of making present how destructive the violence we undergo daily as Women of Color is by noticing clearly how it affects the ways we love ourselves and others, how we are loved, and how that affects the quality of the relations that make up our communities. In this section of the workshop, let's think about *loving big* in contrast with *loving small* as we are weighing the enormity of violence in our lives and whether it is worth working towards its eradication.

Each woman writes down in the newsprint one or two characteristics of loving small and loving big. *[Write large enough so everyone can see it.]*

LOVING BIG

LOVING SMALL

The group discusses the two lists, changes them, adds, takes some things away..

Do you want to love big? How important is it to you?



BREAK [10 minutes]

Eradicating violence against Women of Color towards living violence-free lives [1hour and 30 minutes]

We have talked about the two movements that work against violence as we prepare to meet the violence with backup and with good strategies and to prevent it. Now we want to move to thinking not just about preparation that leaves us always having to deal with violence, but about eradicating violence and building strong communities. So next, let's consider whether the Movement Against Violence Against Women and the Movement Against Prisons/Police Brutality aim at making it possible for people of color to love big, whether they aim to build strong communities of color and whether they include the eradication of violence against Women of Color as central to community building.

Movement Against Violence Against Women

Does this movement aim at making it possible for people of color to love big?

Does this movement aim at building strong communities of color?

Does this movement aim to eradicate violence against Women of Color as central to the project of building strong communities of color?

Movement Against Prisons/Police Brutality

Does this movement aim at making it possible for people of color to love big?

Does this movement aim at building strong communities of color?

Does this movement aim to eradicate violence against Women of Color as central to the project of building strong communities of color?

AFTERNOON

Conclusion [50 minutes]

Your discussion in this section may end with your thinking that neither movement has these aims. But because you are Women of Color who think these aims are crucial to our lives, you may experience a double bind, that is, neither option is good. You might find that the movements do work towards improving the nation state and they do work towards bettering the lives of men of color. But you may also find that these movements

- *neither see Women of Color and violence against Women of Color centrally
- *nor do they address relations among people sufficiently
- *nor address community and community building.

BREAK [10 minutes]

Building Violence-Free Communities: Brainstorming [2 hours]

If we have arrived at reasons to think that we need to move from constantly dealing with or trying to prevent particular episodes of violence, and

If we have come to think that neither of the contemporary movements against violence aim at eradicating violence against Women of Color,

Do you think we need a new movement that places eradicating violence against Women of Color at the center and places building strong communities of color at the center?

Would you want to work on eradicating violence against Women of Color? [*Notice that this work accompanies the work of preparing to meet violence rather than replaces it.*]

In discussing this question consider Incite!, a new movement against violence against Women of Color that is a movement for us to design.

Congratulations, you have concluded this workshop!

Workshop evaluation

Diplomas



TONI MORRISON

“Loving Big” and “Loving Small” in *Beloved*, p. 162

Sethe:

It was a kind of selfishness I never knew nothing about before. It felt good. Good and Right. I was big, Paul D, and deep and wide and when I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between. I was that wide. Look like I love em more after I got here. Or maybe I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn't mine to love. But when I got here, when I jumped down off that wagon—there wasn't nobody in the world I couldn't love if I wanted to. You know what I mean?

Paul D:

So you protected yourself and loved small. Picked the tiniest stars out of the sky to own; lay down with head twisted in order to see the loved one over the rim of the trench before you slept. Stole shy glances at her between the trees at chain-up. Grass blades, salamanders, spiders, woodpeckers, beetles, a kingdom of ants. Anything bigger wouldn't do. A woman, a child, a brother—a big love like that would split you wide open in Alfred, Georgia. He knew exactly what she meant: to get to a place where you could love anything you chose—not to need permission for desire—well, now, that was freedom.

JUNE JORDAN

“Where is the love?” in *Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*. Ed. Gloria Anzaldúa, pp.—174, 175, 176

And it is here—in this extreme coincidence of my status as someone twice stigmatized, my status as someone twice kind to the despised majority—it is here, in this extremity, that I stand in a struggle against demoralization and suicide and toward self-love and self-determination. And it is here, in this extremity, that as a Black feminist I ask my self and anyone who would call me sister, Where is the love?

And it seems to me that the strength that should come from Black feminism means that I can, without fear, love and respect all men who are willing and able, without fear, to love and respect me... this means that as a Black feminist I cannot be expected to respect what somebody else calls self-love if that concept of self-love requires my self-destruction.

As a Black woman and feminist, I must look about me, with trembling and with shocked anger, at the endless waste, the endless suffocation of my sisters; the bitter sufferings of hundreds of thousands of women who are the sole parents of hundreds of thousands of children, the desolation of women trapped by futile, demeaning, low-paying occupations, the unemployed, the bullied, the beaten, the battered, the ridiculed, the slandered, the trivialized, the raped and the sterilized; the lost millions of beautiful, creative momentous lives turned to ashes on the pyre of gender identity.

It is against such sorrow, such spiritual death, such strangulation of the lives of women, my sisters, and of powerless peoples – men and women – everywhere, that I work and live, now, as a feminist, trusting that I will learn to love myself well enough to love you [whoever you are], well enough so that you will love me well enough, so that we will know, exactly, where is the love: that it is here, between us, and growing stronger.

DISCOGRAPHY

<u>ARTIST</u>	<u>SONG TITLE</u>
Macy Gray.....	"Still"
Billie Holiday.....	"Ain't nobody's business"
Billie Holiday.....	"Come Rain or Come Shine"
Tracy Chapman.....	"Born to fight"
Jill Scott.....	"Watching me"
Sweet Honey in the Rock.....	"Ought to be a woman"
Bessie Smith.....	"Sing sing prison blues"
Bessie Smith.....	"Poor man's blues"
Eve.....	"Love is blind"
Queen Latifah.....	"U.N.I.T.Y"
Tiffany James.....	"Won't you stop"
Lauren Hill.....	"ExFactor"
Toni Childs.....	"I've got go now"
Toni Childs.....	"Next to you"
Christina Aguilera.....	"I'm ok"
Christina Aguilera.....	"Fighter"
Lhasa.....	"Anywhere on this road"
Venus Square.....	"I'm alright, I'm okay"
India Arie.....	"Get it Together"
India Arie.....	"Ready for Love"
Ganessa James.....	"Believer"
Ganessa James.....	"In 2 U"