

Tangible Action Steps to Incorporate Abolition and Transformative Justice Approaches and Lens to Direct Services and Systems Advocacy Work

Visibility

- Visibility is subversive - it results in more people feeling comfortable in approaching us. Visibility is a way to challenge all the systems you work in.
- Add LGBTQ flag and pronouns to email signatures.
- Put up BLM signs.
- Create a land acknowledgment statement and put it in your email signature.
- Develop and publish an organizational anti-racism statement.
- Ask QTBIPOC staff if they'd like to create an advisory committee to the organization to address visibility of the organization to historically marginalized groups; it's their space—supervisors have to be invited to the space and can't dictate the agenda.

Separate Outreach from Systems Partners

- Restructure staffs' time to target your outreach to the community rather than trying to share resources and educate criminal legal systems to pass the information onto survivors they interact with. Get information to people about your services before they need it.
- Develop outreach strategies that will create a network of advocates/allies in the community. Design outreach events and support groups that put survivors and allied community members in the same space so safe, healthy relationships grow (no disclosures required).
- Embed yourselves in the community so people can find you directly rather than embedding yourselves in the system requiring referrals.
 - Results in improvement in accessibility and increases in people coming forward, specifically the most harmed.

Review The Board's Background and Impact on QTBIPOC Survivors

- Criminal legal system representation on the Board makes your services inaccessible and unsafe to marginalized folks.
- Get the Board involved in learning and unlearning the movement's harm and carceral approaches—do a book club with Ijoema Oluo's "So You Want To Talk About Race?"

Collaborate

- Collaborate with like-minded, like-hearted sisters in this movement rather than the systems, regardless of jurisdiction.
- Jurisdictions are a carceral framework. Work more as a collective rather than separate county agencies which only keeps us isolated and less organized for real change.
- Outreach video with sister agencies about why anti-racism work is important.
- Anti-racism conversations and support from neighboring sister agencies to process and learn together.

- When you're not devoting time to the CL system relationships, you can direct that energy elsewhere.

Targeted services

- Redesign services and staffs' time involved to reach people who experience the greatest rates of harm.
 - For example, instead of doing student groups in the schools widely; spending more time doing groups with LGBTQ youth. Target support groups to survivors in the jails whose survival has been criminalized. Stop offering court-mandated or CPS ordered services that make your program a tool of the criminal legal system, and instead devote that time and energy to survivors who are electing to use services.

Shift Hiring Priorities

- Instead of prioritizing prior experience in the field, recruit for people whose values align with anti-racism work and who are lifelong students; it's very challenging to unlearn carceral feminist lens and an attitude of "this is how I've always done it."
- Sample interview questions: what's a reason someone might not call 911? Are you a feminist? How do TJ and prison abolition intersect with approaches to end gender based violence? Are you comfortable distributing Narcan, emergency contraception, and clean needles? How do substance use and violence intersect in a survivors' life?
- Work to personally view retention and education differently—it's not our responsibility to carry everyone along. Accept you will lose people and it's not our responsibility to carry everyone through on this learning if they're in a markedly different place. If we try to support someone who is really stuck on carceral approaches or not open to change, we risk ourselves getting stuck and continuing harm for the folks we serve. It's better to say see you and maybe we can meet up later in this movement.

Training for Staff

- Devote required and regular staff time to unlearning your carceral feminism and white supremacy framework.
 - These concepts are not new! Get yourself the theoretical framework in QTBIPOC feminisms to get caught up in your learning; helpful to understand the theories before can determine day to day, practical applications for your program.
 - Book clubs during staff time to rebuild your foundation and carry folks through together.
 - Hire consultants with gender studies backgrounds and focuses on abolition feminism and transformative justice to lead training for staff. Team up with other agencies to hire the consultants to break down the isolation and cut costs.
- Spend the time needed to thoughtfully reformat onboarding and orientation of new folks to make sure you're not centering carceral options.
 - Be real. Step back to analyze how you think and communicate about the carceral system—you still sugar coat it even when you think you're non judgemental or even cynical about it.

- Be willing to spend the time investing in someone's learning. Teach and embed TJ concepts in every conversation and chance you get. Allow time for those conversations and un/learning—it's okay if it's not on the agenda. This investment in each other's learning is how they will become activists actually creating change and be able to teach/lead others so oppression can be challenged collectively by the movement.
 - But if someone is repeatedly resistant, part ways, don't try to carry them.

Program Policies

- Look at your own program's policies toward the people you serve.
- Remove punitive, carceral approaches toward staff and participants.
- Go through your shelter rules—Rewrite things to support residents requesting accommodations if they're struggling with need.
- want our policies and practices to be life-affirming and supportive for the many complexities people face, not punishing them for those complexities.
- Rewrite policies and procedures so that you're not dependent on LE for that service or access to resources, ie transportation, referrals.
- Quantity over quality is a core principle of white supremacy culture. How can you prioritize quality in your services?

Listen

- Listen to people in a new way. Operate as a team differently to create new resources.
- Learn to be okay without having answers. Learn to be uncomfortable and experiment. Map alternatives together as a staff, with the people you serve, and with sister agencies. Be willing to change on the dime when something isn't working.
- Approach housing differently. People don't want to be in shelter nor should they have to be. Shelter exists from us being stuck in a capitalist, scarcity mindset. People with money and social connections don't have to go to a shelter – they stay in hotels, with family, or rent an apartment. So, helping the person address the financial and connection needs resolves the need for shelter.
 - Examples:
 - Embrace dumped a lot more money (thanks to covid) into Flexible Financial Assistance. Give people money and the dignity over their own lives to decide what to do with it – it's a more effective safety measure than a communal living situation.
 - Living Independently through Financial Empowerment (LIFE) Program worked. – this was ARPA money that was directly paid to survivors; \$3500 over a 3 month period of time.
- Create a safety net of resources for survivors.
 - Ruth Wilson Gilmore says “Abolition is about presence, not absence. It's about building life affirming institutions”. Build safety by making food, shelter, connection/love present in peoples' lives.

Communication

- Communicate differently - validate problems with systems but don't try to fix them.
- Change your language and understand why. Language is powerful.

- Examples:
 - Use “Criminal Legal System” rather than “Criminal Justice System”
 - Talk about more than just the direct services work you do.
- Validate people’s experiences and help them navigate but not reform the problems. Don’t sugar coat the response from criminal and civil legal systems. Be real with what people can expect. When you’re real, people go to other sources to create a safety net like neighbors, friends, finding different housing, getting a new front door that locks properly, etc. People will create relationships with others in their community and find emotional safety.
 - Don’t promote “call 911 if you’re in danger” as the first step in obtaining safety.

Evaluation

- Evaluation is critical to being accountable to people, not other systems.
- The reality is that advocates do a dance between helping survivors and helping the system. Our helping more and more veers toward the systems because that’s what we’re familiar with and funded to do. Evaluation helps you stop that veering, that carceral creep in your work, and instead focus on the outcomes that are best for survivors.
- Get demographics added to your surveys.
- Find academic partners to team up with you to do the evaluation and share relevant research to guide your approaches. Working with evaluators who are doing research on your work also helps to sustain your program’s practices that actually work for survivors, so we can shift this field away from being flooded with research and evidence that carceral options work.
- Look at your data reports differently:
 - Example from Embrace: So few survivors get restraining orders, so why would we dump so much staff training into knowing every path of this system?

Calling Each Other In/Out

- Listen to QTBIPOC colleagues—if something is labeled as harm, it’s harm. No explanation needed.
- Be an aspiring ally. Be more vocal and take more risks so that BIPOC leaders in the state don’t have to be the ones constantly calling out and labeling the harm.
- Calling people in/out is scary and uncomfortable. Being called in/out is also scary and uncomfortable to call folks in or out. See CLAIM handout and Everyday Feminism article.
- Dismantle your white fragility and defensiveness when you’re called in. TJ acknowledges that every human being has the capacity to cause harm because we are steeped in a culture of white supremacy. The underlying conditions that allowed the harm to happen; that allowed you to think it’s okay to handle something a certain way is what’s being addressed. Being called out doesn’t make you a bad person or erase the good work you do.
 - There’s a reckoning happening in our anti-violence movement, can’t let relationships censor you. We need to work through the harm as a movement—face it head on.

- Let go of relationships that hold you back. Come with me or stay here, but I'm not staying with you because it will hold me and the movement back. (Kaba and Freedom Inc).

Embrace Resources:

[Anti-Racism Statement — Embrace](#)

[Evolving Concepts of Justice and Safety](#)

Safe & Together Institute Podcast w/Leigh Goodmark: [Episode 32: Domestic Violence Advocacy in a Time of Police Reform: An interview with author Leigh Goodmark, and the staff of a survivor agency who stood up for racial equity and got defunded for it](#)

[Western Wisconsin Anti-Violence Programs: We Believe Black Lives Matter](#)

Land Acknowledgment (partnered with culturally specific sisters and inter-tribal council to develop): *I acknowledge the Anishinaabe People on whose ancestral lands I am grateful to work and live as a guest. Embrace honors Indigenous people as ancestral keepers of this land, and we acknowledge the genocide, displacement, ethnic cleansing, and forced removal of Indigenous people across the seven continents.*

Flag Image for use:



History of the Police:

[Police History Origins, Time](#)

[Slave Patrols and the Origins of Policing, Ella Baker Center](#)

Understanding Defund the Police:

[Defund the Police: What does it mean, why does it matter and what could it look like here? - Wisconsin Examiner](#)

[What Defund the Police Actually Means – Rolling Stone](#)

<https://surj.org/resources/defund-the-police-toolkit/>

[Confessions of a Former Bastard Cop | by Officer A. Cab | Medium](#)

[In Defense of Looting](#)

Understanding Defund the Police in the context of DV/SA work:

[Who Is Serving and Protecting Assault Victims? | Dame Magazine](#)

<https://twitter.com/survivepunish/status/1318623143133507587/photo/1> - DV Wheel & State Violence

Leigh Goodmark article: [01 Beyond Criminalizing Domestic Violence — Alchemist](#)

[Don't Use Domestic Violence Victims To Derail Police Reform | HuffPost Voices](#)

['Who will protect you from rape without police?' Here's my answer to that question | Moira Donegan | The Guardian](#)

[If We Abolish Police, What Happens to Rapists? | Teen Vogue](#)

[What 'Defund the Police' Means for Sexual Assault Victims | Dame Magazine](#)

[The Defund Movement Aims to Change the Policing and Prosecution of Domestic Violence - The Appeal](#)

[What Domestic Violence Activists Can Teach Us About Police Abolition](#)

[Stop Asking What Sexual Violence Victims Will Do without Police | Bitch Media](#)

[Police officers in the US were charged with more than 400 rapes over a 9-year period | CNN](#)

[Sex Workers Have Never Counted on the Cops. Let's Learn from Their Safety Tactics - Truth Out](#)

[From the Executive Director's Desk: Police Can't Help Survivors Heal - RALIANCE](#)

[How the Mainstream Movement Against Gender-Based Violence Fails Black Workers and Survivors – Mother Jones](#)

[The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws](#)

[Refusing to be Complicit in our Prison Nation: Teachers Rethinking Mandated Reporting](#)

[Abolish Mandatory Reporting and Family Policing](#)

[THE DEFUND MOVEMENT AIMS TO CHANGE THE POLICING AND PROSECUTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE](#)

[Alternatives to Calling the Police for Domestic Violence Survivors](#)

Transformative Justice, Community Accountability, and Abolition Feminism:
[letter to the anti-rape movement](#)

[INCITE-Critical Resistance Statement](#)

[What is Transformative Justice?](#) (11 minute video)

[What Does Justice Look Like for Survivors?](#) (8 minute video)

[How to Support Harm Doers in Being Accountable](#) (16 minute video)

Victoria Law, [“Against Carceral Feminism”](#)

[Carceral Creep, Mimi Kim](#)

Mariame Kaba [“Yes, We Literally Mean Abolish the Police”](#)

Mariame Kaba and Shira Hassan, [Fumbling Towards Repair](#)

Mariame Kaba [We Do This 'Til We Free Us](#)

Angela Davis, [Abolition. Feminism. Now.](#)

[Abolition. Feminism. Now.](#) Conversation between Angela Y. Davis, Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, and Beth E. Richie moderated by Mariame Kaba

[Angela Davis Calls for 'Abolition Feminism Now'](#)

WI Refugee Family Strengthening Project, Theory of Change: [WI Hmong Advocates Lessons Learned 2011 \(2\).pdf](#)

[The Practices We Need: #metoo and Transformative Justice Part 2](#)

[Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind - The New York Times](#)

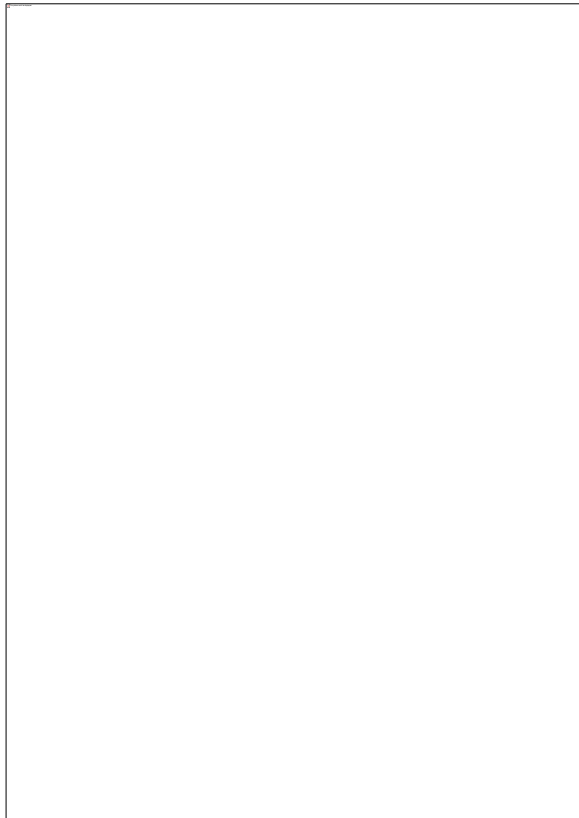
[One Million Experiments](#) - Podcasts

[Uncaging Humanity Rethinking Accountability in the Age of Abolition](#)

White Supremacy Culture:

[Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want to Talk About Race](#)

[Calling In: A Quick Guide on When and How - Everyday Feminism](#)



[White Fragility and the Rules of Engagement](#)

[Me And White Supremacy](#)

[Dr. Joy Degruy on empathy for Black people in America](#)

[White Supremacy Culture Characteristics;](#)

[https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white sup culture 2020.pdf](https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture_2020.pdf)

[Ijeoma Oluo - The Pyramid Scheme Of White Supremacy | The Daily Social Distancing Show](#)

[How to Be an Antiracist | Podcast - Brené Brown](#)

[At least four Black women and girls were murdered per day in the US last year | Gun crime | The Guardian](#)

Reminders on the intersections of Anti-Racism and Anti-Violence Work:

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/racism/>