

## 2/21: NOTES FROM SESSION 6: MOVING FORWARD

### Learning Goals:

- Identify goals, methods, and strategies for reproductive justice advocacy
- Affirm the theological, ethical, and personal sharing within the group
- Inspire/solidify relationships of accountability within group or with outside partners

### Handouts:

- How to Organize your Friends and Family on Thanksgiving  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E4zcy7ngRsdooVpDQ4QF2Of0znDJuAi2/view?usp=sharing>
- Reproductive Justice: Options for Mobilizing  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gfL9GSuqh8e-CqrEmv-JiyQnknedqGJ/view?usp=sharing>
- Completion and Evaluation Form

### Chalice Lighting

Song: We Shall Be Known by MaMuse ft. Thrive Choir

- [Link to listen to the song](#)
- [Link to read the lyrics](#)

Reading: We have come into this room of hope by Libbie D. Stoddard

### Check-In

*Think about the provision of utilities (electricity, water, etc.) through the lens of Reproductive Justice. What comes to mind?*

- I was thinking about the electricity, and what to prevent it prevented the opening of businesses which could be crucial for the production reproductive justice, I know that personally I haven't been able to get my medicine from Walgreens because it was not a reproductive justice related medicine but if I couldn't get it to where people who were deprived reasons, and also said, Well, I had emergency medical needs and found out that there were no urgent cares available. During this time, and so I had to pay \$500 for a splint, which could could also be like. It needs related to reproductive justice that, and that cost could prohibit others from seeking out. Oh that one, you know, even though it's just a week one week can be crucial when you have to make decisions about reproduction.
- Yeah, I you know I recall that one of the I'm in stack now that you know one of the tenets

of reproductive justice is raising children in a safe and healthy environment, and that really can't be safe and healthy when we don't win we can't depend on basics like power and clean water.

22:03

- Yeah, you kind of took the words out of my mouth. Yeah, I'm thinking about being in Texas this week, and knowing that, you know, like for example like my sister with, who has a newborn and a toddler. And, you know, lives in a really nice neighborhood all this, their power and their water went out and they had to relocate to where we were in order to be able to take care of their family right and that there are a lot of folks who didn't have that option.
- 22:35
- And, yeah, just the thinking about the distribution of resources around, Austin in particular because that's where I am, and thinking about how you know there were some areas that were really well attended to and others that weren't so also the, the geography of those utilities, and how that feeds into whether people are able to care for their families, and able to you know to to be in a safe and supportive environment. This week has really laid a lot of that bear, where I am. Yeah. Thank you. Um, and I'm having grown up in the east coast where snow storms are kind of a norm and you know power outages and then now I'm living in California where there's been fires. And you know it's it's just really interesting for regions that really haven't been impacted, seeing what it's like when there's a lot of finger pointing oh they're not prepared they're not prepared, it's just been like the Justice around all of this and of course impacting the reproductive health and access disproportionately for certain populations. Anyway, just, it's just interesting for areas that haven't experienced this to be like, Oh, this can happen to us.
- 23:46
- Um, something that came to mind is like, I don't know if it quite counts as utility but like with transportation and a week making a difference like in states that have really restrictive laws on abortion where it's like okay, as long as you're before this mark. If your mark happened to pass when you didn't have transportation, because like we didn't prepare our roads for this.
- 24:22
- Um, I was thinking about this stuff in the news I'm not in Texas, so I would I, um, but you know seeing in the news about the utility bills and people having their bank accounts drained because of unregulated utilities, and that is going to wreak havoc and people not being able to feed their families and not being able to get whatever kind of medications and services they need so that is really another whole factor in this whole tragedy. Right, thank you and that that ties very well to Phyllis his comment about potential relation to economic justice.
- 25:20
- nd, right, it just flat out costs more, when you have to reschedule appointments. Yeah.
- 25:28
- All right. So thank you everybody for your thoughts on that.

## Successful Organizing for Reproductive Justice

Speaker Kim Varela-Broxson (she/her) from the National Network of Abortion Funds discussed effective organizing goals and strategies.

- Kim Varela is someone that I've known for a couple years through the democratic socialists of America Austin chapter. She works for the national network of abortion funds. And she has a presentation that she gave to the feminist caucus of the Austin DSA that from just about the first two or three sentences out of her mouth I thought I gotta take this to the RJ seminar because this is very very apropos, you know, we are, we are in this session really starting to focus on where do we go from here? The idea is that this is not just about learning and education but it is a call to action. And I think we need to be very intentional and strategic in that and Kim is going to give us some suggestions and direction on what is effective action for Reproductive Justice. So Kim. Please, take it away.
- 27:26
- Thanks so much, Elizabeth, and thank you all so much for having me. Elizabeth has told me a little bit about the you know the seminars y'all have been attending each, each weekend, and it's really, really, really good to see people from around the country, getting involved in reproductive justice organizing. I have been, I have meant to send Elizabeth this background and those with I'm sorry It has been a week.
- I have been involved in reproductive justice organizing here in Austin. For the past about four or five years, partially through the Austin democratic socialists of America but also through the various abortion funds. I'm here in town. So, like, Elizabeth mentioned I work for the national network of abortion funds, and I am an IT manager. Yeah, I'm the computer person, but the work that we do supports local abortion funds abortion funds our local autonomous nonprofit organizations that help people pay for their abortion, or help them get to their abortion or help cover childcare, while they get their abortion right there's so many things that go into being able to get this reproductive health care and abortion funds are really there to step in where we don't have the state supports, right, and there's no one, the state doesn't offer you someone to watch your child while you get health care that's not how that works here now. So abortion has really tried to step in for those folks who who need that assistance and or need financial assistance right so what I'm here to talk with y'all about today is all about organizing. So, organizing can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. So what we're going to talk about today is sort of.
- 29:10
- We're going to use Jane maca levy who is primarily a labor labor organizer she wrote this fantastic book called no shortcuts. This is a book that we did a book, book club on. It is not reproductive justice centered it's primarily about labor unions, but the way that she talks about it is thinking about you know when labor unions were really powerful and how they were tied to social movements, and how together they really impacted society right we had a growth in labor unions we had the Civil Rights Act, we had all of these all of these powers moving. For towards change that was for the betterment of the working class and over the past 30 years we've seen those things sort of fall. And she discusses kind of why that is why have unions lost the power, and a lot of it has to do with the

strategies around organizing strategies around how do you get people up and out into action, which I think fits in really nicely with what y'all are where you are in your path through this reproductive justice seminar, so I'm going to go ahead and share my screen, I'm going to try to keep the chat up so if you have a question, please feel free to type it in there.

- All right, I'm gonna pull up this little chat over here too, in case that pops up. Okay, cool. So a lot of. Forgive me for using some slides. These are from the training that I did with Elizabeth so they are branded with the democratic socialists of America stuff, but they look really nice so we're just gonna keep with it. So thank you for joining us for our organizing training here today to go over our agenda, we'll talk a little bit about why we're here and talk about the difference between advocacy mobilizing and organizing those words tend to be thrown around a lot and so we want to kind of break them apart and talk a little bit about how their theory of power is a little bit different, the strategy that people who are using those take, and then how they what the people focus is, how do they, how do they see people as as being a part of these, these strategies, And we're gonna talk a little bit about transformational organizing that's where I want to spend a lot of our time today.
- 31:35
- We'll talk a little bit about structured versus self selecting groups. So thinking about groups of people who are put together already. Maybe because they attend the same church or they're in a neighborhood association versus people who come together voluntarily.
- 31:53
- And so kind of how what can we learn from what what can different groups learn from one another. And how does that, you know, work into our organizing.
- 32:04
- Cool. So really quickly starting off with a check in, feel free to type stack, if you want to speak out your answer or if you want to pop it in the chat. Most of y'all have your pronouns already in your little name so that's perfect but if you want to include your name and pronouns please do. But I'm curious to know when someone says that they're an organizer, what does that mean to you, what is organizing. When you hear that, what does that sound like in your circles. And feel free to, if you want to come off of mute, Glenn type stack and I'll just call on folks.
- 32:46
- Cool Rosella you want to start us off.
- 32:50
- It's work is the work involved in getting people together and making and making things happen.
- 33:00
- I love that, I love that making things happen. Mm hmm. Thank you.
- 33:05
- Kathleen said gathering people for a collective purpose to take action on that purpose. Yes, absolutely. To push for change, boots on the ground slash legislative work yep and we'll talk a little bit about the different kinds of work on the document that organizing can

look like as well. Thank you for that.

- 33:24
- Alright, I'll give just one more minute in case anyone else has some thoughts in that.
- 33:30
- Ooh, I'm interested in that Elizabeth you want us, can you say a little bit more.
- 33:44
- Um, yeah, this, this. So, Ernie Cortez was way back I don't know decades ago that was the name that that I first learned about the industrial area foundation that he modeled, an effective way of organizing from the grassroots perspective, and can please please amplifier or augment that because I know that's a really lame.
- 34:12
- He's justified, much more than that but like he was, I think of him as the person who said, folks, this is how it can be done. Yes, absolutely thank you for that community where community organizations and nonprofit work sure there are absolutely a lot of a lot of organizations that really try to mobilize and move folks into.
- 34:33
- into action. Great, thank you all so much for these answers and these are great and we'll talk a little bit about. And as we go through and remember I'm kind of relying on on the no shortcuts book and Jean McAleese definitions for certain things. So know that like these are not concrete like this is the only the only definition of organizing and this is the only definition of advocacy or mobilizing, but rather that this the way that she lays it out really makes it really helpful to kind of like compare and contrast when you're thinking about what sort of like what are the actions that you want to take and what impact they're going to have right. So, we'll chat a little bit about that as we go. Cool. Thank you.
- 35:17
- So our goals for today defining and discussing advocacy mobilizing and organizing and why reproductive justice advocates should focus on the ladder although we need all of it, we need all the help we can get y'all. I'm exploring structure based groups talking about organic leaders and identifying how we can use those concepts within our reproductive justice organizing.
- 35:39
- Cool. So this is, um, this is the mission statement for the DSA, and so this was included in the previous one, I just wanted to give it a quick shout out so the DSA is a largest socialist organization in the US with over 70,000 members, I think now we're over 90,000 which is great. We believe that the working people should run the economy and society democratically to meet human needs and not to make profits for few. We show this commitment we show our commitment to this principle by being an organization of by and for the working class, so a lot of the. You might notice that some of the streams of the conversation today are a lot about how we can mobilize normal working class people and to effect change in their, in their environments, right, I think something that we've seen a lot in Texas over the past week is just how you know how the powers that be really do control a lot and their negligence is really laid bare right now, knowing that our power grid was warned about this 10 years ago and nothing happened.
- 36:42

- DSA and the type of organizing that we're talking about today is really geared towards How can we move normal people regular people into action in order to to affect the types of change that we need right like a power grid that protects all of us, and not profit for the investors.
- 37:03
- Cool. So we talked a little bit about this. And so we're going to discuss the how to put what y'all have learned into practice you've been spending a many weeks now talking about reproductive justice. So let's talk a little bit about how we get closer towards realizing it right and realizing it for everyone and not just for some right. Some folks. Some folks already have reproductive justice folks who don't have to worry about missing a week of work or, you know, a month of work a year of work. There's a lot. There's a lot of folks who don't have to worry about it but many of us do.
- 37:34
- So first what I want to talk a little bit about is let's talk about power. So, if you would like to pop in the chat you're welcome to if you would like to come off with me. Go ahead and type stack and I'll call on you. But I'm curious to know what is power, who has it over you. Who do you have it over, but also what is it not, and is power an abstract concept.
- 38:02
- And so we can think about this in terms of in terms of reproductive justice, and in kind of all over the place right so we think power is a really funny word for me right now being in Texas right where we lost a lot of us lost power for a long for many days this week. And that plugging in right that that idea that someone, someone had the switch to decide whether we have power or not right that that alone is power. Lawmakers absolutely state government. Absolutely. And said the ability to make decisions that impact others. So a sex ed teacher has power over what students learn. absolutely in Texas we're having a big problem with trying to get comprehensive sex ed passed, and you can imagine it's a very uphill battle and power is the ability, economic, social and legislative to make decisions for yourself. Absolutely. Absolutely. So I'm kind of related.
- 39:03
- So, it can be public policy, it can be bosses, it can be the health care system right the employer having the power to provide reproductive health care or not.
- 39:13
- In order to make a change, we have to build power over these systems right we have to make it clear that the, that, because the labor of. I mean, the labor of reproduction the labor of, you know that that we that that the working class has and exerts for the bosses is something that is powerful in itself but it's only powerful once it's cohered together over others who have less information or education absolutely right. This week has, has been a lot about power here in Texas, in terms of like just thinking about, I think I didn't hear from my like council person, until a couple of days into this I was finding information on social media, and that itself is is a display of power, right. So now that we've identified kind of what we're talking about when we talk about power. Let's talk a little bit about the theory of power so the theory of power, and we want to think about how to social change occur, right. So, how do how do changes actually come about in our society. So, there are a couple of different theories of power. We've got two listed here the great man

theory of power. There you can think about like baito standing on that table right, like, I'm here and I'm here to help Texas change right, that this one person is going to be able to change and fix all of the problems in our lives. That's not how any of this works. None of the changes that we've been that we've had over the past 50 years have been because of one individual person, but rather many, many people right exactly the perception that we lack something a charismatic leader that our technology right there's always just something just that one thing that we're missing.

- 41:06
- There's also the raising awareness theory of change so in this theory of change, folks who employ it tend to say, if everyone has a blue light outside of their house then healthcare workers will know that we're thankful for them. And it's like, well, we can also pay them really well and maybe forgive their student debt, but that's a good start. Right. So the idea that like because people are aware of a problem that change will happen right, which sounds nice but it also isn't the way that any of this works so we've got baito standing on the table. In case you've never seen that also like Breast Cancer Awareness Month, it is very good that people are aware of how to get tested right and things to look out for all of those are great awareness campaigns, but they don't necessarily translate into power and into changing the changing the conditions under which these problems like how, like breast cancer being, you know such a, such a dangerous disease.
- 42:07
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month doesn't make it so people can go to the doctor to get health care in order to not have in order to catch breast cancer early, right. So, when we're looking at these types of, when we're looking at power this way, the death rate for static breast cancer has not changed in 40 years exactly we you know, don't get me started. Okay. We'll keep going.
- 
- Note: some definitions are drawn from *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power* by Jane F. McAlevey ([link](#))



*The Democratic Socialists of America is the largest socialist organization in the United States, with over 70,000 members. We believe that working people should run both the economy and society democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few. We show our commitment to this principle by being an organization of, by, and for the working class.*

- DSA

# Power

What is power? Who has it over you? Who do you have it over?

What is power not? Is power an abstract concept?

From Kathleen Thurmond to Everyone: 01:16 PM

Gathering people for a collective purpose to take action on that purpose

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 01:16 PM

push for change

From Ann S (she/her) to Everyone: 01:16 PM

boots on the ground / legislative work

From Elizabeth Gray she/hers to Everyone: 01:16 PM

Ernie Cortez industrial area foundation

From Sage (they/them) to Everyone: 01:17 PM

Community organizations and non profit work

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 01:21 PM

law makers

From Carolyn Swinnea, she hers to Everyone: 01:21 PM

state government

From Ann S (she/her) to Everyone: 01:21 PM

the ability to make decisions that impact others. a sex ed teacher had power over what students learn

From Elizabeth Gray she/hers to Everyone: 01:22 PM



Power is the ability (economic, social, legislative) to make decisions for yourself.

From Kathleen Thurmond to Everyone: 01:22 PM

Your employer has power to provide or not reproductive health care

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 01:22 PM

over others who have less information or education

From Elizabeth Gray she/hers to Everyone: 01:25 PM

The perception that we lack something: a charismatic leader, better technology...

YES! The death rate for metastatic breast cancer has not changed in 40 years.

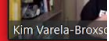
→ Public policy, bosses, and the healthcare system have power over us. We need to build our power over them.

# Theory of Power

How does social change occur?

- Great Man Theory of Power
- Raising Awareness Theory of Change

# Options of Change



- **How can we go about getting what we want from who has it?**
- McAlevey outlines three options: Mobilizing, Advocacy, and Organizing.
- We'll consider: their theory of change, what strategies they employ, and the people focus
  - There's always someone who can give us what we want. Part of thinking about your theory of power boils down to this question: How can we go about getting what we want from who has it?
  - MOBILIZING
  - ADVOCACY
  - ORGANIZING
  - WHAT DO We want people to do? Just show up? Invite 3 friends? See themselves as agents of change?
  - ADVOCACY

Theory of power:  
Elite. **One-time wins** or  
**narrow policy changes,**  
that do not  
permanently alter the  
relations of power.

Strategy:  
**Litigation;** heavy  
spending on **polling,**  
advertising, and other  
**paid media.**

People Focus: **None**

## Advocacy

○

- The idea that chances are, this is going to be something where it's a one-time win, one change to a law, one change to a guideline. But it doesn't fundamentally permanently alter the relations of power--doesn't fundamentally change someone's life or the power someone has over someone else.
  - Example: paid sick days: in Austin we got that campaign to get paid sick days for everyone in the city. That fundamentally alters the relations of power--under that law it wouldn't matter whether your boss thought that your boss wasn't important enough to offer sick time. You would get sick time no matter what.
  - Chance are this work would give something to people but wouldn't fundamentally change that power relationship.
- Strategies
  - Litigation
  - "Polls show that X number of people agree with this"
  - Change.org petitions and that kind of thing
  - "Spray and pray" (talk to a big room of people and hope that some people jump on board)
  - Typically big nonprofit orgs moving towards trying to get some kind of chance to occur--suing an organization or something like that
- We do NEED advocacy but advocacy ALONE isn't enough.
- "It doesn't fundamentally change the relationship of power if the ACLU gets a 6 week abortion ban knocked down, the relationship between people who need abortions and the state."

Alright so when we talk about, you know, those who have the power and the different theories that we can use towards making changes. You know, towards the issues and problems that we have in our lives, we want to talk, we want to think about it in terms of, okay, who has. How can we go about getting what we want from who has it right so for using the Breast Cancer Awareness option right breast cancer awareness is important, and and something that people need to know about, but wouldn't it be more impactful. If, instead of pushing for just awareness that we would push for an expansion of health care. In order for people to get their breast cancer treated without going bankrupt, right, and who has the power to do that.

43:25

So when we're looking at any type of problem I use Breast Cancer Awareness is that option just because it was fresh in my mind from that last slide but no matter what we're looking at whether we're looking at low wages whether we're looking at period products not being available at school right there's always someone who can give us what we want. And part of deciding which what your theory of power, you know, when you're thinking about your theory of power, it really boils down to this question. How can we go about getting what we want from who has it so McAleese outlines three options mobilizing advocacy and organizing. So we just chatted a little bit about theory theories and some theories of change and we'll talk about a couple of more. We'll also talk about what strategies for these three options, people can use, and then also like what's the people focused we want people to just show up. Do you want people to invite three friends. Do we want people to see themselves as an agent of change that I am important and I

am someone who has the ability to bring people along with me in order to make this change.  
Yes, all of you.

44:37

So let's go ahead and get into a little bit of those, those three options so we're gonna start with advocacy.

44:44

So I think you'll have a speaker on advocacy later on today which is really exciting.

44:50

And I also want to outline to just reiterate something I said a little while ago which is that we need all three of these, in my opinion, so I might say something that is critical of some of these strategies that doesn't mean that I don't think it's necessary. Just to be really clear on that, especially given that you have an advocacy speaker coming up.

45:13

So, under advocacy. The theory of power is more elite, it's the idea that chances are, this is going to be something where it's going to be a one time win. Right, it's going to be one change to a lot it's going to be one change to a guideline.

45:34

And, but it doesn't fundamentally altered their relationship, their relations of power. So, it doesn't fundamentally change someone's life or the power that someone has over someone else. A really good example here an example that I'll use here is, is paid sick days, so in Austin, we did a campaign a few years ago to get paid sick days for all workers in the city regardless of what their job was, if they worked 40 hours a week, they deserve to earn paid sick days if they work 30 hours a week they deserve to earn paid sick days that fundamentally alters the relations of power, it doesn't matter. Like you're under that law, it wouldn't matter whether your boss thought that your job was important enough to offer sick time, if you were someone who used your labor somewhere else, you just you earned sick time period right so that's a that's a transformational win. Under advocacy, chances are it's something that gives it would this type of work would give a cheat would give something to people but it wouldn't fundamentally change that power relationship.

46:43

The strategy for advocacy tends to be litigation heavy spending on polling right polls show that this many people agree with this.

46:52

Lots of flashy advertising or paid media. You know, we see like change.org petitions, all that kind of stuff. So it's really sort of like the way my aunt described, going to a big college spray and pray that it was like we would have big rooms of people and hope that someone jumped on board with what we were what we were teaching right so the people focus, there isn't one. It's big, nonprofit organizations moving towards trying to get some kind of change to occur. Usually through suing a you know like suing an organization, something like that. So, we need advocacy, to be clear, we need we need ACLU to go after some of these awful like abortion restrictions right especially in the south. We, these are all things that we need, but it doesn't fundamentally change the relationship of power. If the ACLU gets a six week abortion ban knocked down. That doesn't fundamentally change the relationship of power between the people who can become pregnant and the state

- MOBILIZING

Theory of power:  
Mostly **elite**. **Staff** or **activists** set goals with low concession costs. Back-room secret deal making is common.

Strategy:  
Campaigns, run by **professional staff**, or volunteer activists with no base of actual, measurable supporters.

People Focus:  
**Grassroots Activists**

- 
- Usually behind closed doors, “backroom secret conversations”
- Not always shifting power in a really big way but usually campaigns that try to bring out a lot of people and get a win that won’t cost us much
- Giving people the opportunity to show up for things they believe in but the main focus is “look at all the people we got to show up”
- No base of actual measurable supporters--you want to be able to count how many people you have impacted in order to measure the campaign’s success!

# Mobilizing

Kim Varela-Broxson s/he/er  
Jane McAlevey, *No Shortcuts*, page 11-12

mobilizing is a little bit different so mobilizing, and mobilizing we're gonna think about.

48:18

It's still mostly elite. We're gonna see staff on nonprofits or people who self identify as activists setting goals that they think that we can obtain without losing much right so this is going to be a lot of the she uses the phrase backroom secret deal making, which sounds really nefarious but is, is legit right it's someone it's usually stuff that happens behind closed doors. And these are going to be mobilizing campaigns tend to be things that get little wins, they're not quite transformational they're not shifting power in a really big way. But they are. These are usually campaigns that try to bring out a lot of people so we think of a good example for a mobilizing campaign we actually. We have learned a lot about mobilizing in Austin DSA over the past couple of years, the idea that having lots of activists show up and having you know getting a lot of people out to come to my March or come to my protest right like the Women's March, amazing so many 1000s of people, you know, you know, marching all over the all over the country.

49:34

Getting grassroots activists right people who probably already agree with each other to show up, or virtually or in person to do a thing.

49:44

These are good, this is good, it is good to get to give people opportunities to show up, and to stand up for something that they believe in. That is a good thing, but it doesn't transform me, it doesn't make it doesn't shift power in a meaningful way other than, look at all the people we got to show up.

50:04

It's also important that NACA levy us. She also identifies a problem with the strategy and that there's no base of actual measurable supporters. The idea that you want to be able to count how many people are you've impacted. You want to be able to count like, I brought five people to come to this thing. That's an important detail because that helps you measure your success for a campaign.

- ORGANIZING

Theory of power: **Mass, inclusive, and collective.**

**Transformation** of power structure.

Strategy:  
Recruitment & involvement of **specific, large numbers** of people.

People Focus:  
Developing **skills of organic leaders** who recruit new people in

- 
- Fundamentally shifts power relationships between whatever industry you are in
- Recruiting and involving specific large numbers of people
- More focus on measurable outcomes (versus “just” actions)
- Examples
  - Amazon actions in Alabama right now--unionizing via individuals talking to their coworkers, talking about problems they were having and bringing them on board. “Normal people conversations”
- Transform the power structure in favor of the constituent and diminish the power of the opposition
- Decipher the hidden relationships between economic, social, and political power
- Mass negotiations of large amounts of people

# Organizing

Jane McAlevey, *No Shortcuts*, page 11-12

- Identifying organic leaders who already have face to face individual connection with people
  - Takes time to identify but is important after you enter a new space
  - Usually people who aren't necessarily paid staff who are paid to organize or do unionization or anything like that.

Now we're gonna move over to organizing and this is kind of what what I what I see is kind of like the goal of all of this is organizing and making those more transformational changes. So here this identifies the theory of in organizing the theory of power is mass, inclusive and collective it transforms the power structure. So whatever the issue is that you're working on it fundamentally shifts the power. So you see a lot of organizing in organizing the strategy is recruiting and involving specific large numbers of people, so we can think about the Amazon union labor actually actions going on in Alabama right now. In order to bring those people in. It started with individuals, talking to their co workers, talking about the problems that they were having, and specifically bringing them on board right without those conversations from normal, normal people. This type of that type of movement doesn't move forward. Right.

51:46

Yeah, Amazon is Amazon is not here to, to, to let this happen easily. So, within organizing it really takes the.

52:00

It really takes every single person, give me just a sec I want to refer to my notes on this.

52:09

So organizing groups are trying to transform the power structure in favor of the constituents and to diminish the power of their opposition so specific campaigns are fit into a larger a larger strategy. So they prioritize power analysis, they involve normal, normal, ordinary people, and decipher the often hidden relationship between economic, social and political power. So settlement, usually comes from mass negotiations with large amounts of people. So again, going back to that Amazon. Example, they're currently voting on their on their union right now so getting all of these people to sit first say yes I you know getting enough people to say I want a union, and then bringing all of those people in to sign their cards right to say yes, we should all have a union, this should be for all of us.

53:13

So, I'm in, in organizing and again I keep using labor examples and I'll try to use more reproductive justice ones, as we move forward but I want to talk a little bit about this people focus on organic leaders. So, um, organic leaders to me it's really funny because I think this is a really.

It's one of the you know those things that kind of like give a phrase is something that like is just normal and inherent. So an organic leader is just someone like when you go to a space. You can really easily identify who the person everyone else listens to is right, those people that the others just naturally follow, or naturally are like, yeah, I'm gonna listen to what that person has to say, like, they're here all the time, they always check in on me. They check in on everyone right, that's an organic leader. And so in organizing your, the people focus is focusing first on those organic leaders, and then using them to bring their followers in so if you think of like, sometimes

it's going to be. Sometimes it's going to be the person who's talking at the front of the room. But other times it's going to be the person handing out drinks by the cooler.

- MOBILIZING VS ORGANIZING

# Compare

Kim Varela-Broxson she/her

## Mobilizing

- Mostly elite. Some paid staff.
- Results in weak wins
- Grassroots activists, but no measurable base

## Organizing

- Mass, inclusive, & collective
- Results in transformational wins
- Develops skills in organic leaders to bring in new people

- 
- With mobilizing it's easy to say "thousands of people showed up to the women's march" but difficult to say how many people kept working towards concrete change after that.
- Organizing is more about bringing in a wide range of people for transformational wins--e.g. Every worker gets a paid sick day, every worker gets a weekend (a transformational win from long ago). Universal basic income. Universal childcare.
- Organizing is about identifying organic leaders who are already there, NOT bringing in people to replace them--YOU can lead this meeting, YOU can put out this message
- What could transformational wins look like for RJ?
  - Universal abortion coverage
  - Paid parental leave
  - Universal health care
  - Recognizing economic contribution of domestic labor
    - Speaker recommends Birth Strike (book) by Jenny Brown
- When do we need to mobilize, and when do we need to organize?
  - Mobilizing
    - Demonstrations
    - Packing the State House with bodies to voice opposition or promotion of a bill
    - Can be more reactive, but isn't always (can be proactive!)
    - Building momentum



- Example: show up at the local power building and hold a demonstration regarding the power outages: we want answers to why this system wasn't weatherized decades ago, get as many people on the streets to that place as possible
    -
  - Organizing
    - Sustained, complex action in the long term
    - Clear idea of target, long-term effort
    - Example: who is in charge of our power grid? Who is on ERCOT's board? Why do they have the power to decide whether systems are weatherized or not? Does it relate to their bottom line? Energy is a public good and should be a right of all people to have electricity. Bring people in towards a bigger movement for green renewable energy. (Which a demonstration could be a part of, but giving people tools to have conversations with people they know to build mass and momentum.) Removing electric power from hands of investors and moving it into the hands of the public.
  - Mobilizing being the short, focused expression of public opinion vs organizing being the long-term, multi-strategy movement to redistribute power regarding a certain issue?

## The key here is transformation vs. transaction.

Low-level asks are easy, but how can we move people to see themselves as agents of change?

- Transformational change vs transactional change

## Transformational Organizing

- Skill building, like 1:1 conversations, canvassing, etc.
- New social ties through collaborating on an action ***where you make meaningful decisions with someone else***
- Changing your perception of yourself

- Change perception of yourself from “someone that things happen to” to “someone who makes change happen” -> build your skills (1:1 conversations, canvassing, etc) -> make new social times thru collaborating on an action where you make meaningful decisions with someone else
  - Not about making someone your friend but making the connection thru working for a common goal using a shared strategy
  - “those who want change work with others to acquire the resources they need to make the change they want.”

## In No Shortcuts, McAlevee differentiates structure groups & self-selecting groups.

What’s the difference & what are some examples?

- Structured groups often have 4 walls: the places we meet. My church, my kid’s school, my HOA
- Self-selecting groups are more like clubs: DSA, mutual aid groups, not necessarily tied by geography or physical place

Folks who join a group because of a pre-existing interest.

Often already agree politically.

Usually relies on mobilizing techniques.



## Self-Selecting Groups

Folks who are bound together by a place, like a church or a workplace. There is a clear quantifiable number of people.

No indication they agree politically.

Building a majority & growing power relies on relationships over time.

# Structure-Based Groups

**What structure-based groups are you a part of, and how can you leverage your relationships towards building a movement for reproductive justice? (or towards winning the campaign you're considering?)**

- our congregations
- Using union chapters to strategically decide policies/people we fight for.
- I'm a member of the church that's hosting this seminar. And a resident of my neighborhood, which has been doing a lot of mutual aid this past week.
- Congregations for sure! Part of what I'm really proud of with my church is our participation in the Sanctuary network in Austin, providing long-term shelter to undocumented people from ICE. I would love to think about what actions we could take as a congregation to directly help people who need abortion services
- Groups include: Human Trafficking Board; Resistance group of women; letter writing group for campaigns; Intersectionality group : racism & sexism etc.
- School PTAs fighting for fair school geographic boundaries (one can hope...)

These conversations are already happening. How can we use them to build power?

- Existing relationships are a key site of power, especially when they overlap

# Building Power

- If power has to be built through relationships among the working class, existing relationships are a key site of power, especially when they overlap
- Workplaces, Churches, Apartment Buildings, Civil Associations, and tight neighborhoods put lots of people in contact, with networks of knowledge and trust. Bringing the whole social unit along is both more efficient and more POWERFUL than grabbing individuals one at a time

## More on Building Power

- These structures also put us into relationship with people who don't already hold our political beliefs
- Several of these structures are *strategically advantageous*. Having a majority at a single site of power lets you do things being spread out can't.
  - Who do we know? And who do THEY know?
  - Examples
    - Church joining a coalition of other churches calling for disbandment of ICE due to its negative impact on our communities
    - Having a mutual aid network-=multiple locations throughout the city to get water so people don't have to drive thru ice is strategically advantageous!

# More on Building Power

- These structures also put us into relationship with people who don't already hold our political beliefs
- Several of these structures are *strategically advantageous*. Having a majority at a single site of power lets you do things being spread out can't.
- What would be an example of a strategically advantageous structure & to what end?
  - What strategically advantageous structures exist...
    - Network of churches instead of just one church

## So what is a leader?

What traits does a capitalist society tell us our leaders should have?

## So what is a leader?

What traits does a capitalist society tell us our leaders should have?

What traits make you trust someone or view them as a leader?

How can organizations inspire more people to step up and be leaders?

white male

From Rosella Altman (she/they/he) to Everyone: 02:03 PM  
ambition

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 02:03 PM  
decision makers

From Kathleen Thurmond to Everyone: 02:03 PM  
Money

From Sage (they/them) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
Educated

From Me to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
Have to have power in order to become a leader in order to have power.

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
direct

From Emily Gardner (she/her) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
Attractive

From Rosella Altman (she/they/he) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
willing to sacrifice everything to work

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
aggressive

From Rosella Altman (she/they/he) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
healthy

From Adri Perez to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
competitive!

From Eveline Buehlmann (she/her) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
not those

From Kathleen Thurmond to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
Authentic

From Sage (they/them) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
Listening to others

From Emily Gardner (she/her) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
Empathetic

Transparency

From Rosella Altman (she/they/he) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
passion

From Ann S (she/her) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
listening

From Rosella Altman (she/they/he) to Everyone: 02:04 PM  
sinceriyt

Focused on needs of working class  
flatten heirachy

Show more leaders that look like me

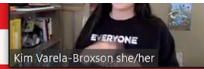
Encouragement-ask them

Make leadership sustainable to avoid burnout from community leaders  
show everyone is a leader in one way or another

# Why do people step up and become leaders?

- AOC--they asked her!
- From Kathleen Thurmond to Everyone: 02:05 PM
- Passion about a cause, personal experience
- From Emily Gardner (she/her) to Everyone: 02:05 PM
- Being frustrated
- From Dyanne Cortez to Everyone: 02:05 PM
- I think some people are naturally endowed with some quality that makes people want to look to them, follow them. That can be a good thing or a bad thing.
- Shared ministry

## Key takeaways: Organic Leaders vs Activists



- It's important that we don't evaluate leaders in a social network by our idea of who they should be, but the relationships they have
- A leader is someone who has followers- leader status is ALWAYS dependent on a particular social context. If relationships are power, it is always important to identify existing relationships
- Organic leaders may be more focused on bringing people along with them while activists may be more of a "look at me, this is about me as an individual and my actions"

## Key takeaways: Organic Leaders vs Activists



- An organic leader is NOT the person who has the strongest identification with your movement
- Correctly identifying organic leaders can help you move entire social structures to your movement. Activist-centered approaches can get you stuck in a “low plateau” of participation
  - Organizers call on existing relationships to bring people in.
  - Organizing emphasizes interdependency and being in community/in relationship.

## Opposition Case Study: Anti-Choice movement



- Half of all front-line activists in the anti-choice movement (people lobbying, protesting planned parenthood clinics, harassing doctors etc) had either NO political opinion about abortion or were pro-choice before they attended their first event
  - Most came to their first event because they were invited by a friend or member of their church, not independently seeking out or finding through advertisement
-



- There was no organized evangelical political movement in the US in the early 70's- a strategy of directly targeting existing churches for politicization was implemented over decades

## Applying the Concepts



- **Question 1) What surprised you about the case study for anti-choice advocates? What principles of organizing did it illustrate and why?**
- **Question 2) What organizations are you in currently? To what extent would you classify them as Advocacy, Mobilizing or Organizing? Why?**

## One-on-One Conversations



1. **One:** Introduction, Purpose, Context for Convo
  2. **Two:** Get to Their Issues
  3. **Three:** Vision, Plan to Win, Urgency
  4. **Four:** Call the Question, Frame the Choice
  5. **Five:** Inoculation
  6. **Six:** Next Steps, Follow Up Plan
- 
- Conversations need to be structured and principled convos with folks about issues that are important to them
  - Stick to the plan in the conversation that you have! It's not a normal conversation, your personal instincts might fight against your organizers' instincts. You're not just chatting,

you want the other person to DO something and you have an idea about what “success” looks like (get 3 friends to come to this thing, donate to this specific fund, etc)

- Start off with a clear purpose and context for your conversations
  - Ask them questions about what issues are for them related to this topic (teh election, their workplace, their experiences with abortion, their concerns about childcare right now)
  - Identify that there is a choice between whether this thing yo uwant gets addressed, or not.
  - Follow up for next steps--follow-up plan is really important bc that makes sure that you follow up with this person, and makes sure that they actually do what they agreed to
  - Remember this is a skill. This is something you work on and get better at. Help you develop relationships into a working relationship and bring someone else into organizing.
- 
- Levels of involvement for transformational change:
    - Advocacy--writing letters, visiting politicians
    - Mobilization--starting to get more involved, gathering in groups
    - Organizing--identify natural leaders who are already trusted by the group, and those natural leaders get people on board
    - Transformational change
  - Kae references “liars’ dividend”: “the first thing you hear is what you believe.” (also known as **Anchoring Bias** in psychology: Wikipedia link [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchoring\\_\(cognitive\\_bias\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchoring_(cognitive_bias)) )

Kim may possibly reference work from:

Ziad Munson (Sociologist)

**The Making of Pro-life Activists: How Social Movement Mobilization Works**

“Do ultra-conservative religious beliefs propel people into the pro-life movement? Ziad Munson’s fascinating study shows us all the ways that question gets it wrong.

Commitment to an issue is often a *consequence* rather than a *cause* of activism.

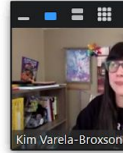
Dr. Hahrie Hahn,

*Prisms of the People: Power and Organizing in 21st Century America*

**<http://www.hahriehan.com/books>**



# Thank You



Feel free to send questions to:

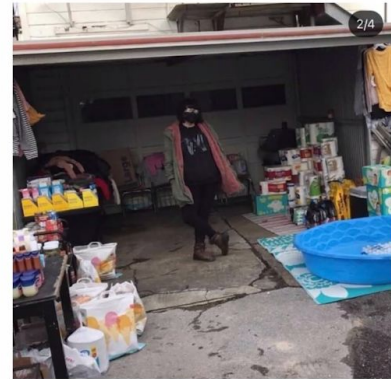
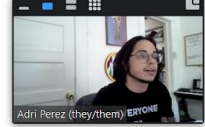
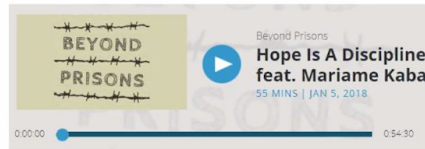
[kim\\_varela@me.com](mailto:kim_varela@me.com)

## BREAK

Local Government Advocacy (20 mins) **Evan** reads bio to introduce Speaker Adri Perez (they/them), Policy & Advocacy Strategist from the ACLU, will talk about organizing specifically in local government, against anti-RJ initiatives and for pro-RJ causes/policies.

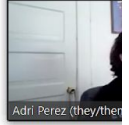
BIO: Adri Perez joined the ACLU of Texas in July of 2018 as the engagement specialist for the El Paso area. As a native fronterizx, Adri is familiar with the issues on the border and the complexity of growing up in a binational community. Prior to their work with the ACLU, Adri studied Biochemistry and Secondary Education at the University of Texaes at El Paso. They are a transgender, queer, and xicanx danzante, educator, and organizer with 5 years of community organizing experience on the border specific to reproductive rights, LGBTQ, immigrant rights, and civic engagement. Adri is most passionate about exploring and incorporating healing justice values into their daily practice. In their spare time they love to cuddle their schnauzer, Ollin, draw, write poetry, sing, and hike in the Franklin Mountains.

# Grounding



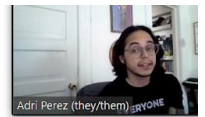
- Foundations to advocacy based on the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart
- It's been crisis after crisis in 2020 and 2021 so grounding is important
  - "Hope is a discipline" not an emotion, or optimism ; important to be in the world, and be of the world - Mariame Kaba
  - Image is of Blair who we heard from last week, who organized a whole pantry outside of her house to provide basic needs!
- Who is a strategist? What is strategy?
- How have you strategized this week?
  - Finding resources and the most efficient way to share them with the people who need them
  - From Dyanne Cortez to Everyone: 02:29 PM
  - We had to plan meals around the idea that power might be on or off without warning.
  - From Sage (they/them) to Everyone: 02:29 PM
  - Keeping everyone in the household updated about how we're conserving water and power
  - From Karen Kortsch. (she/her/hers) to Everyone: 02:29 PM
  - Trying to get covid 19 vaccine
  - Listening to what other's need
  - Checking in on others

# Strategy is...



- **Motivated:** Committed to the goal and clarity of our vision
- **Evolving:** Each outcome builds upon the last to achieve high level change over time
- **Intentional:** Our tactics are rooted in our theory of change and present constraints
- E.g. vision: that everyone has access to food, water, electricity and basic necessities
- What is your theory of change?
  - ACLU has theory of change of using litigation to impact
- **Strategy is something we DO, not something we HAVE**

## What is Strategy?



### Strategizing is turning

What you **have**  
**RESOURCES**

Into what **you need**  
**POWER**

To get what **you want**  
**CHANGE**

- Why do we choose organizing?
  - It can solve immediate problems that we are facing currently in society
    - E.g. Bostock case or Obergefell case--they worked, but they took 5-7 years--the litigation theory of change takes a long time. Organizing is more immediate.
  - Build power with others
    - Relationships are what keep us safe
  - Develop leadership
    - There is room for everyone--know what you're good at and strong at and lean into your individual strengths
      - Eg I am not very competitive and am very emotional focused but I lean into that caretaking role and pairing up with others who need caretaking while they compete
  - Create a more resilient community that weaves us together through our strengths
- 4 basic questions of organizing
  - What is our strategic goal?
    - Does it give people a sense of their own power? Does it make a tangible change?

- Who are our people?
  - Who is on our side and who are we going up against?
- What is our theory of change?
  - For example: litigation, public education campaigns
- What are our tactics?
  - What are the specific things we are doing to achieve the change we want?

## Texas told cities they couldn't fund abortion providers. So Austin is funding abortion access instead.

Adriana Perez / they/them

On Tuesday night, the Austin City Council approved \$150,000 for organizations that help women afford incidental costs like transportation, lodging and childcare when they seek an abortion.

BY **STACY FERNÁNDEZ** SEPT. 11, 2019 UPDATED: SEPT. 12, 2019

- This above is a successful campaign! Winning practical support for abortion funds from the city budget
  - Practical support is things like transportation, lodging, childcare that are needed to support abortion services
  - This was a direct result of local govt organizing!

### RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, of Brooklyn, New York, was one of the most notable and influential Justices to have served on the Supreme Court of the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, Justice Ginsburg broke barriers and served with distinction as a law professor at Rutgers Law School and Columbia Law School, and as a co-founder of the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union; and

**WHEREAS**, Justice Ginsburg served on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit for 13 years and on the United States Supreme Court for 27 years;

**WHEREAS**, the jurisprudence of Justice Ginsburg blended moral purpose with precision and technical mastery of the law;

**WHEREAS**, Justice Ginsburg embodied the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* ("repairing the world");

**WHEREAS**, Justice Ginsburg brought to her entire legal career, including her jurisprudence, a focus on reducing discrimination, particularly against women of every

- Not all city council members were on board at first!
  - Making phone calls
  - Having phone calls with individual city council members to make sure they were on board BEFORE it came to a vote

TX @ACLUtx

NEW: @ElPasoTXGov passes a resolution honoring Justice Ginsburg as a champion for gender justice, abortion access & civil rights and commits to preserving those rights for all of El Paso. Thank you @CityRepAnnello, @district3elpaso and @PeterSvarzbein for your leadership. #RBG

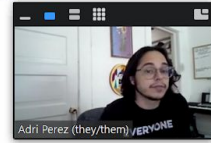
5:15 PM · Oct 13, 2020 · Twitter Web App

98 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 427 Likes

denise oliver @ · Oct 13, 2020 · ...  
Replying to @ACLUtx @ACLU and 4 others  
Beautiful ❤️

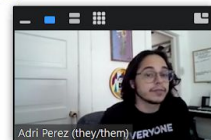
## Step one: Identify our strategic goal

- What does victory look like?
  - Does it win concrete improvement for people's lives?
  - Give people a sense of their own power?
  - Alter the relations of power?
- To think about: What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps towards your long term goal?
- In 2013, Wendy Davis filibustered til midnight and they still voted after midnight and then got caught having voted after midnight and the bill died, and then they had another special session, brought the bill back and passed it. So things that could be reversed or things that fail are still worth doing
- What are some current needs your community is facing right now?
  - People without housing/shelter
  - Decriminalization of homelessness
  - Health care for contraception for uninsured/underinsured people
  - Childcare and transportation for people getting abortions
  - Only 3 providers of surgical abortions, people have to travel hours
- Texas ABortion Access Network
  - Local abortion organizing



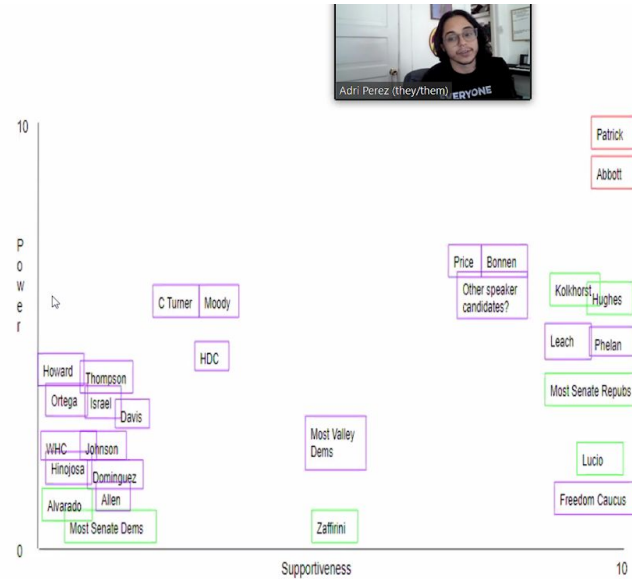
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# Power Mapping

- Write the names of all the actors on post-it notes
- Then place them on the power map where you think they're most likely to be
- Start with yourselves
- Include allies too!



- We talk a lot about a “moveable middle” in the movement generally but given what GA and AZ have shown in this last electoral cycle, it's less about convincing our opponents to be on our side, and more about empowering people who are already on our side but may not know how to take action, or may have repeatedly lost faith in a govt that has failed them
- School board to city council to house rep pipeline--lower level elected officials are important
- Having an ally at any level--you will probably retain that ally as they move into more power

## Step two: Who is our target

- Primary: Who has the power to give you what you want?
- Your targets can include:
  - City Mayor and/or City Council, County Commissioners, State Representatives/Senators, School Board Trustees, District Attorneys
- Secondary Who has the power over the people with the power to give you what you want?
  - You can 1:1 an elected official! You have probably already met some of these people

***We presume our power, not our powerlessness.***

***We are agents, not victims.***

***We spend more time building than attacking.***

***-AMC, 2013***

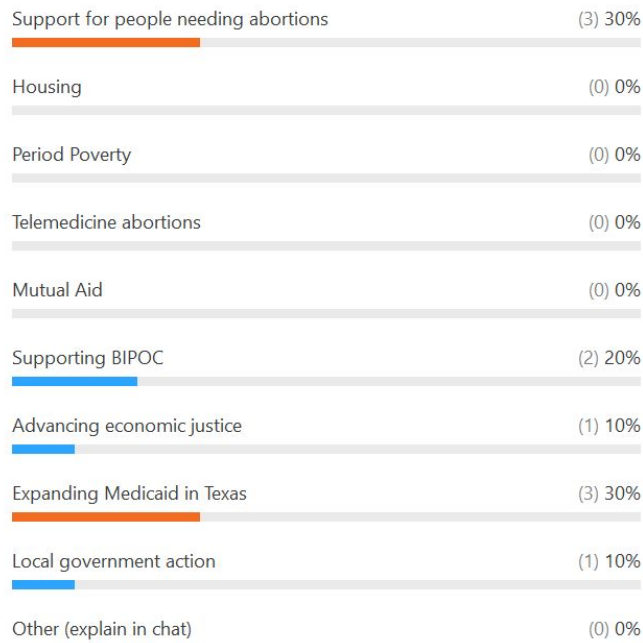


through volunteering or through being their constituent.

### NEXT WEEK: INITIAL PLANNING FOR REPRODUCTIVE ADVOCACY

Do Zoom poll, to find out what activities people are interested in. Categories match what was in the “Mobilizing for Action” document.

#### 1. Which issue would you like to work on?



Once poll results are visible, it should be evident which groups have at least 2 people each. If any categories with too few, redo poll and let the people who selected an option that didn't have enough people choose a different category, if they want to.

If there are still multiple single-person issues after the 2nd poll, and each of these people are only interested in their respective topics, have them pair up with a person from another issue and the accountability portion will be discussing how each person will find people to organize with around their respective issues.

Participants rename themselves with the number of the area they want to work on. Break into groups to *begin* discussion. Seek to identify common ground and connection, and reason for committing to this action.

- What made you select this category for action?
  - Do you have any prior activity or interest in this area?
- What specific outcomes would you be most interested in working towards? [note: not actions, but outcomes]

Group will commit to creating a detailed work plan in the last and final seminar session, with the

people in their group, including how they hold themselves accountable. From that point forward, each group is self-sustaining.

Note: tell people to exchange their contact info in small breakout groups so they can continue to keep in touch.

#### Debrief and Closing (5 mins) Sage

- Ask participants to share with the group one new idea that struck them during the session. (Depending on time: in chat or stack)
- Ask participants to type in the chat if they would like to be added to a class contact list. If yes, please type “yes I agree” in the chat along with preferred method of contact (whether they prefer text, email, phone call, Facebook message or whatever)
  - Questions will also be included in final evaluation survey for anyone who misses this class session
- A link to an electronic evaluation of the class will be distributed in the chat, and in a follow up email. They are encouraged to share their feedback with the curriculum developers.
  - Link to survey: <https://forms.gle/Ynep4fnt4nhmwzH7A>
  - NEXT TIME: do a pre and post assessment of the confidence and competence questions.
- Read Prayer for Living in Tension by Joseph M. Cherry and extinguish the chalice.