



LEARNINGS FROM 8 YEARS OF TRAINING

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Integrative Learning</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Notes from our trainers</b>	<b>4</b>	Where we started	34
<b>Our journey</b>	<b>5</b>	What is popular education?	34
A new era	5	What is experimental learning	34
Our shared approach	6	Our Methodology:	
What we built	7	Integrative Learning	35
Looking back	7	How we did this	36
Our context	8	How we evaluate success	42
<b>The best thing I ever learnt was to be wrong, and I might be wrong about that too</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Notes from our trainers</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Notes from our trainers</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>The Learning Ecology: the social context in which people learn</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>What we did: why, how, and what we learnt</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>What worked and what didn't</b>	<b>46</b>
What learning is	13	<b>Considerations for designing liberatory learning spaces: what we actually did!</b>	<b>48</b>
What is the purpose of education?	14	Power dynamics / anti-oppression	48
Our philosophy on how people learn best	15	Conflict	51
Are we just trying to be worthy?	15	Trauma	54
How we built our methodology	16	Accessibility	55
Campaign Bootcamp residentials	17	<b>Notes from our trainers</b>	<b>59</b>
Practical approach in the room	18	<b>Start with care – the rest will follow</b>	<b>60</b>
Trying to codify our approach: abolition as a framework	20	<b>Final reflections</b>	<b>62</b>
How abolition can exist as an alternative education system	23	<b>Thanks</b>	<b>62</b>
Building life-affirming institutions	30	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>63</b>
What's our practice and our process?	32	Resources	63
		Glossary	67
		Timeline	68



## Dedication

This report is dedicated to Shaun Mitchel, who came on the journey with us. A powerful campaigner and trainer, with the biggest heart and the best laugh. Your commitment to justice stands as a benchmark for us all. We miss you Shaun.



# Introduction

In 2022 the trustees of Campaign Bootcamp closed the organisation. A series of internal challenges led to this decision (you can read more about this on the Campaign Bootcamp legacy website). In its nearly ten years of existence, ever since a group of campaigners originally got together to run a one-off training, countless lessons were learnt about the practice of education within activist and campaigns spaces. This report is a summary of learnings from those who held the methodology of training at Campaign Bootcamp over the last seven years. Our aim here is to archive and share what we built as educational practitioners, in the hope that these lessons don't get lost with the dissolution of the organisation that housed them.

This report can't encompass all the lessons that came out of our work - there were scores of people involved, and hundreds of lessons and stories. But herein you'll find the values that informed our approach, the context in which we built the programmes, and the frameworks we used to develop our methodology and approaches to learning. This is a record that seeks to acknowledge what we tried to do, what we did well, what we failed at, and what we had yet to try.

## The authors

This report has been written and edited principally by three people:

**Anna Collins Nham**, who was Head of Training at Campaign Bootcamp from 2015 till its close

**Nim Ralph**, who worked with Campaign Bootcamp as Lead Trainer from 2015 and who held much of our methodology, content, and trainer development programme

**Grace Jeremy**, a Bootcamp residential alumni who joined our team as a trainer in 2019 and went on to run our beginners training for trainers programme

Structure and editing support came from Rowan Kinchin, another Campaign Bootcamp alumni who worked with us as a freelance facilitator, and on staff as a training manager over the years. Sections entitled 'Notes from our trainers' were shaped by collaborative responses from a number of Campaign Bootcamp trainers: Tamara-Jade Kaz, Karen Larbi, Rif Ahmed, Sé Carr, Sue Balcomb, as well as Grace and Nim. The cover illustration was created by Tamara-Jade Kaz.



# Notes from our trainers

Campaign Bootcamp training was...



# Our journey

## Anna Collins Nham and Nim Ralph

In 2014, having run three week-long residential bootcamps for digital campaigners, Campaign Bootcamp recognised that it needed to bring educators into the core team. The bootcamps were successful, with campaigners putting up funding towards the second session by the end of the first. What was also apparent was that while some were thriving, others were not.

The approach Campaign Bootcamp took was taken from the New Organizing Institute (an American organisation). Alongside this was the founders' history, with a bias towards the style valued by the British private educational system. Hours were long, agendas were always packed, and digital skills content was presented as the only valid pursuit with expert after expert brought in to share their knowledge. However this approach has been designed by and for *some* (white, male, able-bodied, mentally healthy) and therefore leads to the exclusion of *others*. Though the organisation tried to address the balance of who had access to the training through a rigorous scholarship programme, they hadn't yet made the leap to what that meant for actually how they ran the training.

## A NEW ERA

In 2015 Campaign Bootcamp put out a call for a Training Manager to build the training programme. They hired me (Anna). I'd recently been on a one-month training for trainers run by [Training For Change](#) who had developed a pedagogical approach called Direct Education. In Training for Change's own words, Direct Education "is about liberation and empowerment. Unlike traditional education, which gives all the expertise to textbooks and teachers, Direct Education invites the wisdom of people's own experience. The practice comes out of popular education traditions – like those popularized by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire – and adds to it."

Building on my experience on the Super-T programme, I re-designed the Bootcamp curriculum. Taking the core curriculum I'd inherited – campaign tools for digital campaigners – and turning it into a learning experience that went beyond the literal campaign tools being taught.

The first thing I did was write a set of guiding principles for how we would run our training spaces from then onwards. These are principles I still return to today.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**We believe in freedom.** We believe that training spaces should be places of freedom, where the current systems of injustice – which includes how people are conventionally taught – are directly confronted and challenged

**We believe in real learning.** We believe that deep and long-lasting learning happens best through experiencing things, through learning by doing. This learning is best enabled when people take risks and step outside their comfort zone

**We believe in individuals.** We celebrate that everyone brings their own identity, background, and life experiences into the training space. We celebrate that everyone engages in the space based on their own learning style

**We believe in community.** We believe in being connected to something bigger. That when individuals come together to learn from each other and their history, they can create something more powerful than any one individual alone

**We believe in transformation.** We believe in working with people towards personal moments of transformation. It is these moments that lead to the larger transformation of people, policies, politics, and ultimately the very systems, both written and unwritten, by which our society functions

Soon after, I reached out to find an experienced trainer with the same values and approach to help me develop and deliver the programme. Along came Nim, who had both years of transformational justice and mediation experience, and also shared a critical view of the way power and privilege were being handled in training spaces at the time.

## OUR SHARED APPROACH

Most of the educational spaces at this time in the UK were at a very basic level of power and privilege training. While they were well-intentioned, trying to meaningfully shift issues in the movement, they often lacked a lot of nuance and efficacy.

It was our view that a lot of this was inherent to the modality of education that was being utilised. The most powerful movement work we've known was through shared struggle: building *relationships* and working together through issues and differences towards shared goals. Telling people what to do and not to do, pointing to power differences without *addressing* them, and ultimately relying on shame as the modus operandi were, in our opinion, failing to shift the dynamics in these spaces.

We don't for a moment mean to suggest that either a) this was exclusively the fault of those attempting to run these trainings – intolerable power imbalances existed and real harm was being done in movement spaces to many of us, or that b) people shouldn't have made attempts to change those harmful cultures. But what we observed was that these approaches weren't working. Cultures and behaviours weren't changing and it wasn't leading to an increase in solidarity – often just the opposite.

So we set out to build a learning space that tried to do something different, a space that:

- ◆ built relationships across difference without avoiding power dynamics
- ◆ leaned into conflict but attempted to move through it without shame
- ◆ helped people learn about each other while building and centring new leadership

- ◆ helped people find unlikely political comrades, friends, allies and collaborators
- ◆ centred justice, transformation, power, and movement-building in its *approach* not just in its content
- ◆ held a methodology that didn't only point out difference or power, but actually supported people to develop the tools and experiences to manage them *together*

The intentionality around the methodological approach to learning and social justice were also about addressing *who* spaces like this, well-resourced spaces, are designed for. That was something fundamental we wanted to change. We wanted to move Campaign Bootcamp away from its digital campaigning roots and towards being a space of learning for people doing social change work. Particularly we wanted to centre those who weren't connected to wider movements and / or didn't have access to training and support, and those who might not even consider themselves activists or campaigners but who were nevertheless taking action and campaigning for justice.

## WHAT WE BUILT

Campaign Bootcamp's methodology was applied through fourteen further residential boot camps, the development of Everyday Activism (which worked with local organising groups), and a Distance Learning (online) programme.

While running programmes with a methodology that required discipline, critical self-regard, power analysis, and skills in navigating conflict, one of our biggest learnings was that we needed a pipeline of trainers who were skilled in using the methodology. During Anna's early years we had relied on bringing Training For Change trainers over for ad hoc joint training with other organisations. But it was clear we needed something far more focused and UK-specific. In 2019 this led to Nim developing UNPACKED, our training for social change trainers.

## LOOKING BACK

Over the last seven years we've learned and unlearned, failed and achieved a lot. All this work has happened in the context of some major social movements: the Black Lives Matters movement, the Gender Recognition Act consultation and consequent fallout, abolitionism gaining prominence, climate justice becoming much more led by actual justice narratives – to name just a few. These social movements brought many key topics to the forefront in more substantive ways including anti-oppression, power within our movements, and harmful dominant cultures and narratives. Our journey is inextricably linked to those of these movements.

Our journey also ended before we were ready. The closure of the organisation means we no longer have the structures and funding to continue on this journey. This report could never hope to cover everything we learnt. But as the organisation closes we hope it will stand as a place in which some of these lessons are archived, so that future movement educators and those interested in supporting movement education can take what we tried to do, what we did well, what we failed at and what we hadn't yet tried – all our learnings, and continue this work.



## OUR CONTEXT

We were building this programme in a specific context and moment in time. It's important to contextualise ourselves within that, and to reflect on how the social, political, cultural landscape of 2014 has become the world of 2022 we know today.

**UKIP** MADE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN THE UK EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS WINNING MORE VOTES THAN LABOUR AND THE CONSERVATIVES, **DAVID CAMERON** WAS PRIME MINISTER, THE INQUEST INTO **MARK DUGGAN'S** SHOOTING FOUND HE'D BEEN "LAWFULLY KILLED", **THERESA MAY** WAS HOME SECRETARY AND LAUNCHED AN INVESTIGATION INTO UNDERCOVER POLICING, **THE FIRST GAY WEDDINGS** TOOK PLACE AFTER THE SAME SEX COUPLES MARRIAGE ACT PASSED IN 2013, AND THE **TROJAN HORSE AFFAIR** LETTER WAS PUBLISHED IN NATIONAL MEDIA. **EBOLA** WAS EPIDEMIC, THE **UKRAINE CONFLICT** ESCALATED AND PRINCE CHARLES REPORTEDLY LIKENED PUTIN TO HITLER IN REFERENCE. WE SAW THE RISE OF ISIS, GANGNAM STYLE, THE **SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM**. **ROBIN WILLIAMS** AND **PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN** DIED, ELLEN DEGENERES TOOK HER FAMED OSCARS SELFIE, KIM AND KANYE GOT MARRIED, **CONCHITA WURST** WON EUROVISION, **THE ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE** DOMINATED FACEBOOK, AND **MALALA** WON THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. **OBAMA** WAS PRESIDENT, **MICHAEL BROWN** WAS KILLED BY A POLICE OFFICER IN FERGUSON, AND **POLARISATION** OF SOCIAL/POLITICAL BELIEFS HEIGHTENED. **ROLF HARRIS** WAS CONVICTED FOR INDECENT ASSUALT, BILL COSBY WAS ACCUSED, AND AN **INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL CHILD SEX ABUSE** WAS LAUNCHED. **BORIS JOHNSON** WAS MAYOR OF LONDON, **ED MILIBAND** LED THE LABOUR PARTY, **ALEX SALMOND** STEPPED DOWN AS FIRST MINISTER AND LEADER OF SNP, AND **NICOLA STURGEON** TOOK OVER- MAKING HER THE **FIRST WOMAN TO BE FIRST MINISTER**. **KEZIA DUGDALE** WAS ELECTED AS LEADER OF SCOTTISH LABOUR, THE FIRST WOMAN BISHOP WAS APPOINTED, IT WAS THE **UK'S WARMEST YEAR ON RECORD**, **STUART HALL** DIED, IAN PAISLEY DIED, AND THERE WERE FLOODS IN WALES. **'TRANSPARENT'** LAUNCHED ON AMAZON, **'HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER'** PREMIERED, **'PRIDE'** AND **'SELMA'** WERE RELEASED, THE TOP GROSSING FILM WAS 'TRANSFORMERS, GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY' AND **'FROZEN'** CAME OUT, **SOLANGE AND JAY-Z** HAD A FIGHT IN AN ELEVATOR, AND **GWYNETH AND CHRIS MARTIN** CONSCIOUSLY UNCOUPLED.



# The best thing I ever learnt was to be wrong, and I might be wrong about that too

In this blog, Lead Trainer **Nim Ralph** reflects on their experiences as a trainer and educator, telling us the story of the UNPACKED Programme.

I have been “an educator” in social justice spaces for over 15 years. I support people to learn about a range of things from campaign strategy to movement building, from equity and anti-racism to transformational group culture, from conflict skills to decision making processes. I think about learning all the time. I live and breathe learning as my job. As an activist, I am always thinking about strategies for educating people to move to social change.

Educating is a practice. I learn by doing and failing and succeeding and doing again. As I have done this work, I have longed for spaces to learn about learning with other people in social justice educating. Because I couldn't find those spaces, I've spent the last few years building one. This is the story of UNPACKED.

## WHAT IS LEARNING?

I have been trying hard to find a pithy way to describe what learning is, but I've struggled because to me learning is everything. We are all learning. All the time.

Learning is education, but it is also so much more than that. It is care, it is community, it is accountability.

There is no life without learning. Learning is abundant. It is a foundational condition of joy. Learning is about knowing there is no destination, no fixed 'enlightened' endpoint – learning is a process of always becoming. Learning is conflict and it is transformation. There is no environmental, racial or social justice without learning. There is no liberation without learning.

Learning is looking at the frameworks, hypotheses and beliefs we have about the world and constantly testing them.

Learning is unlearning; it is a great undoing.

Education is how knowledge is passed on.

When I talk of learning, most people think of schools and classrooms. But education is the structures we create around how we learn: through experience, through mentors, through people with

specialist knowledge and so on. We are always learning, we are always educating – ourselves and each other.

Schools and classrooms taught so many of us that there are people with knowledge and people without; that there are ‘clever’ people and experts, and then everybody else. This kind of education connects learning to shame. It tells us there is always a right and wrong. Either we know, or we don’t. It tells us that it’s other people’s roles to judge which side of right and wrong we are on. This system connects our knowledge to grades and competition, to inadequacy and failure. Ultimately to capitalism and productivity as workers.

## **A LIBERATED EDUCATION**

But true education is creating space for people to explore their knowledge and be empowered by information. Empowering education is something which you participate in. It allows us to explore our own knowing, and test information and knowledge against what we know of the world. To allow new concepts to change us, and be changed by us. To be always malleable and changeable we are told, is weakness. I believe it is strength: humility, commitment to growth, rejection of fixed ideas about truth and identity. Empowering education is about recognising that we are always becoming.

## **THE BEST THING I EVER LEARNT**

The best thing I ever learnt was to be wrong. To put aside ego and the need to be right. I have felt wrong most of my life; as a trans person, a queer person, a disabled person, a person of colour. Our society has told me over and over that so much about me is ‘wrong’. In formal education, I learnt to compensate for this by overachieving – always being right. To be wrong felt like I was bad, and that connected me to a deep shame. Being right made me feel like maybe I wasn’t bad.

But the fear of being wrong just got worse.

It was only in attending to the shame of feeling an innate sense of “wrongness” that I could find a rightness with myself; a sense of wholeness, joy

or belonging. Facing myself and embracing all the ways I’ve always been told I am wrong has liberated me. Reclaiming my wrongness has liberated me. Being right matters to me less now. I have learnt so much about transformative education from learning to let go of that.

## **MOVEMENT APPROACHES TO LEARNING**

Social movements are founded on the need to reclaim power from those who wield it unjustly over us. Activists are charged with demanding back what has been taken, and building better futures.

Shame can be a powerful tool for activists to shock and stop a practice that is unjust. I do believe there are moments that it becomes appropriate to invoke shame. In an unjust world, there are acts of power-wielding which are shameful. But it is a dangerous tool to use. It’s intoxicating because to wield shame, you wield power. But being powerful is not the same thing as being empowered.

Sometimes this approach to change, alongside deep-seated shaming experiences in education, means we re-create the conditions we hope to fight when we move from activist demands to the long, slow work of organising and educating ourselves and each other.

When we try to teach people by shaming them for getting things wrong, we also limit our own learning by being afraid of other people grading us; judging us as right or wrong. But, we are all making mistakes all the time. A key part of a liberated life is understanding that being wrong isn’t shameful.

We must disconnect being right with being good, and being good from doing good. Transformative education orients itself towards empowerment and away from drawing lines in the sand of good and bad, right and wrong, harmed and harmer.

## **DOING HARM, ACCOUNTABILITY AND FALLIBILITY**

As a fallible person, I am always learning, knowing that I make mistakes. I take this very seriously as a

person often responsible for holding other people's learning in social justice spaces. When we hold spaces for conflicts, or to challenge and educate on issues like racism, we have great responsibilities and carry a heavy load. It's all well and good that I want to accept my own imperfection, but my mistakes can, and have, caused real harm. I think about this all the time. Accountability is the key. Accountability is taking responsibility for the harm caused, it's also being committed to my own learning so that I do less harm in the future. How can I hold other people's learning if I am not attuned to my own? How can I attend to other people's transformation, if I am not committed to my own? Who even asked me to do this work? To whom am I accountable?

I will always make mistakes, yes, but as an educator, I have power over the people I am educating. I cannot turn away from that in confronting my accountability. Educators in social justice spaces often don't hold a lot of power in the wider world, we are often used to being harmed in the structures of an oppressive society. In the confines of the training room, I have a huge amount of power over people: I can say jump and they (often) literally will. But as a trans person of colour, as soon as I walk into the toilet of the training venue, that power dissipates. My power in the world, in general, is very different from the power I hold in a training room as a trainer. It makes me no less accountable in that room, and no more powerful outside of it. That deep personal reconciliation of power and responsibility, of being both harmed and harmer, is a core practice for an educator in social justice spaces.

## **CREATING THE SPACE I'D ALWAYS WANTED**

After 15 years of wrestling with these thoughts in educating work and activism, I wanted to create a programme where social justice trainers, facilitators, organisers, elders, sages and teachers could learn and unlearn and be fallible. To be able to be accountable for our mistakes when we do cause harm. I wanted to build connections based

on trust so that we can reflect and be supported in our growth. I wanted to push back against our self-protective reactions of hiding from our mistakes, of feeling imposter syndrome, of feeling like causing harm means we have completely failed. I wanted to lean into feedback as a practice that is not about shame but co-conspiring, support, solidarity and growth.

So I spent the last few years building Unpacked. A 12-month training for social justice trainers. We are about to complete the first year of this programme.

## **LEARNING, TOWARDS LIBERATION**

I have learnt so much in designing and holding this journey. Not least that this work cannot be done alone. To break down hierarchies in learning we must commit to co-creation and co-development, to peer coaching and investing in the teams who we deliver education with, and in the folks who help us learn while we help others.

I have learnt so incredibly much from the participants who are also my peers, elders and teachers. I've learnt about new ways to extend care and love to people in struggle. I've learnt about leaning braver into difficult conversations and accountability. I've learnt about expecting more of myself and less of myself. I'm still falling over messily into fallibility. And that's the joy of learning.

I'm excited for you to find out more about what this incredible group of educators has learnt and how they've applied it in their personal, political and educating lives. There is lots to learn in their reflections and there is richness in the ways that the skills of an educator are applied to our life and our movement work – I'm excited for you to read about all these ways.

To continue learning, towards liberation.



# Notes from our trainers

## What was different about Bootcamp training?

Bootcamp was a space where emotions were welcomed, instead of treated like a distraction from the learning. I liked how, if groups or individuals wanted to engage in a conflict then that was respected and made into a learning opportunity. Other trainings try to squash conflict by ignoring it and often that makes things worse.

**Truly grassroots. Creating spaces where grassroots activists can form relationships with those in more resourced organisations.**

Bootcamp encouraged the trainers' learnings as well as that of the participants.

The reason for doing activities was not always obvious, e.g. not "do x and you will get y"

### Disrupting silos

Reminder that all struggles are interconnected.

I think that Bootcamp has been influential in the UK left's training style. I've seen its impacts in grassroots activist groups.

**Play, games, joy!!!  
Embodied stuff**

**It understood that learning is an emotional process and in many people's experiences is a site where oppression is enacted.**

### Community-building

It understood that learning is an emotional process and in many people's experiences is a site where oppression is enacted.

It focused on relationships as the site of real social change

Using the wisdom and experience in the room.

### Radically inclusive

Mainstreaming the margins

**Emergent. It was accountable to people over session plans.**

It centred joy as a practice and also as an equal emotional value when things are serious.

**It practised that we can all learn from each other and that we are all always learning.**

### Bringing out difference

Recognising trauma and how it affects us.

### Nourishing

**Included different elements that were not only linked to training, e.g. mental health.**

**Prioritised the learning of the group and individuals in a way that put the agenda after the learning and growth of participants.**

### Learning from the margins

Decentering power and privilege

**Great tools to use in multiple situations / trainings (all accessible via Training for Change)**

Trauma-informed, seeing people as whole, feeling, complex beings.

### Addresses power head-on

Using the Action Learning Cycle to really start to embed what we tried out.

### Tried to be accountable

Centred relationships and emotions

### Recognising ourselves

**Didn't claim to be a safe space. Challenged people but gave them the framework to support them through it.**

**Weight placed on building / creating community so it's bigger than just the training.**

Pushing to the edges of our comfort zones

### Seeing others

# What we did: why, how, and what we learnt

## Nim Ralph and Grace Jeremy

With **special thanks to Sam Corbin** from The Wildfire Project for her coaching, feedback, input and editorial support

Campaign Bootcamp aimed to build the confidence, skills, and relationships that activists and campaigners need to run powerful campaigns. As part of our core programmes we ran week-long trainings that delivered tools and experience in these areas to thirty-five people at a time. What was unique and important about these trainings wasn't so much the content we taught, but the methodology we used.

More than focusing on individual skill sets, we really focused on attending to a web of dynamics in the room including power, accessibility, conflict, and trauma. We did this in order to build a learning experience that created the potential for transformation – both of ourselves and of our social relations. We operated on the assumption that the culture we created together with the activists in the room was a fractal of our movements, and that whatever new ways of being we could create with them would scale up into patterns in wider movements. We didn't expect that transformation to come to fruition in the training room necessarily, but sought to sow seeds that would grow and flourish long after the buses left our venues.

To do this in a way that was rigorous, consistent, and intentional, we built our methodology. A learning methodology is essentially the way an educator chooses to deliver their lessons for people to learn best. There are

many different learning methodologies and they are underpinned by the philosophies, politics, and values that educators hold about what learning is, what education's purpose is, and how people learn best.

## WHAT LEARNING IS

Formal education is something that is often done to you. Those of us who have been through the formal British education system often carry an unconscious belief that all education is done to us because of our experiences in that system. But we believe that real learning happens through our experiences with each other. It happens in dialogue, disagreement, and discovery. We believe learning is something that we actually do all the time.



Learning is emotional: in western education it is typically understood as a rational thought-based endeavour, but deep learning happens in our bodies, our emotions, our relationships, and our spiritual selves – as well as our minds.

Meaningful learning therefore hinges on our relationships – with other learners in the group, with those facilitating the learning, and with ourselves. When we're asked to think about a particularly good or bad lesson we've learnt in life, most of us will think of the people who were there with us in that learning.

*Nim says: "I have a story about myself that I am terrible at learning languages. When I was at school my French teacher would read out the names of the people who got the top score and the bottom scores in our class. I was consistently at the bottom and it was humiliating – my resounding memory of learning French isn't learning to ask where the library is, but the humiliation I felt from my teacher, the friends who let me copy their homework, and the classmates who laughed at me. Conversely, I loved my history teacher – I remember very little about the history of feudal Britain, but I do remember her encouraging me and telling me not to underestimate myself. I also remember my classmates teasing me for liking her so much!"*

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION?

We believe the purpose of education is to build healthy, thriving, joyful communities in which everyone matters and is able to find meaning, purpose and belonging.

School is the place where most of us in the UK first receive a formal education. That education isn't only in spelling and arithmetic skills – we also learn how we are expected to do learning, how we should relate to other people, and how we are expected to behave. These approaches carry through into adulthood; from citizenship tests which expect people to memorise facts about the UK, through to paying taxes which expect people to understand complicated bureaucratic processes without assistance (and be judged as 'bad' or even 'criminal' if they get it wrong). Schooling, whether as children or undergraduates, massively informs how we understand learning in a wider sense as adults.

Education gives us practice in how we are expected to be together as people – how we make decisions, how we relate to rule-following, how we are in groups and in conflict. It teaches us what is expected of us as 'good citizens' and some of us fit the mould, while others don't.

The conclusion of this is that learning environments are places many of us carry negative past (or current) experiences into. We struggle to detach the practice of learning and growing (individually and collectively) from our emotional experiences of the learning environments we've grown in, because learning is both an emotional and relational process.

So if the purpose of education is as much to teach us how we should relate to each other as it is to teach us specific content, then creating new educational practices offers us the opportunity to practice different ways of being. This creates transformational potential for our social and



political systems. We need to practise different ways of doing learning together, so that we can make decisions together differently, disagree with each other more productively, and live in different relationships to each other.

A training room offers an intervention point where we can practise resisting conformity to competitive capitalist cultures, and to practise and imagine new possibilities together.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY ON HOW PEOPLE LEARN BEST

The philosophy underpinning our methodology is that learning is a relational, physical, spiritual, experiential, and emotional process - as well as an intellectual one. To equitably balance these different forms of knowledge, we therefore need to build space into learning environments for all of those processes in order for people to learn most effectively.

We should push back against any hierarchy of forms of knowledge. In western education, there is a marked primacy of intellectual, rational, theoretical knowledge. This is the legacy of white supremacist patriarchal capitalism and its ongoing histories of colonialism and imperials, as well as the codifying of scientific knowledge during The Enlightenment. These kinds of knowledge should not be the only measure of intelligence. Intellectual knowledge is invaluable, but a supremacy of any form of knowledge excludes so many wisdoms, experiences, and opportunities for learning from our societies and cultures.

In holding space for different forms of knowledge, more people are able to access the learning and more wisdom can be shared. We're then more likely to build deeper relationships to ourselves and each other across differences, diversities, and demographics.

## ARE WE JUST TRYING TO BE WORTHY?

We did these things not because we imagined them to be righteous or somehow more worthy, but because ultimately they lead to better outcomes for everyone. In the words of bell hooks:

*"Education as the practice of freedom affirms healthy self-esteem in students as it promotes their capacity to be aware and live consciously. It teaches them to reflect and act in ways that further self-actualization, rather than conformity to the status quo."*

**bell hooks**

When people feel they belong and are supported, the learning they can access deepens. When we create learning practices that enable heterogeneous and diverse participation, we get richer learning and build better relationships. When we pause on the content to follow the group's needs, we build trust and we are able to push our collective learning further. When we create time for critical regard and to receive feedback as educators, we learn about ourselves too. All of this leads to learning that stays with people in their actual lives.

Nim says: *"I recently read Staci K. Haines' The Politics of Trauma, in which she lays out humans' inherent needs for safety, dignity, and belonging. It gave language and structure to the practice I'd been working on within learning environments for 15 years, and which I'd woven into the methodology at Campaign Bootcamp. Rather than focusing on who can perform or analyse the best, we focused on creating an environment of learning in which people could find dignity, safety, and belonging - with no assumptions that any two people will find those things in the same way."*

This approach wasn't always easy because, consciously or not, people carry all sorts of pre-existing traumas, expectations and assumptions about educational environments into a learning space. People have been taught in formal educational settings that learning is about shame and competition. So a key focus of our methodology is supporting people to find joy and a sense of collectivity in learning.

## HOW WE BUILT OUR METHODOLOGY

Nim says: "I came into Bootcamp with almost a decade of experience in British social movement spaces. In addition to organising and campaigning within those spaces, I'd also become a practised facilitator, mediator, and trainer in movements; working to build greater understanding of anti-oppression, power and privilege and to support groups to work through conflict and dysfunction.

*When I was brought in to Campaign Bootcamp it was to support Anna's redevelopment of the Campaign Bootcamp Residentials; a week-long training for 35 activists from different issue-areas to hone their skills, experience, and confidence in campaign strategy. While folks turned up wanting to learn about these "hard" skills, my experience in movements lent me towards wanting to focus on the relational and transformational potential of a learning space with a unique set of conditions; a heterogenous group of activists, a week of time, and a large number of resources to support building access and support.*

*The methodology that we built around this was informed by both Anna's and my own experience, evolved in practice through time, and was iterated on with all the trainers and facilitators who joined us over the eight years."*





## CAMPAIGN BOOTCAMP RESIDENTIALS

We built a learning experience that acknowledged the emotional and relational journey of learning that started long before and continued long after people were in the training room with us. From the recruitment stage all the way through being part of an alumni community, we wanted people to apply their learnings and experiences with us to their own everyday realities.

Within the training programmes themselves, we designed an arc of learning for participants which delivered standardised content, but adapted the way it was delivered in order to respond to the needs and dynamics of the group in the room. This means that no two training sessions were ever the same. They were shaped by the emotional, relational, and physical life of the group in the room.

We adapted the agenda to whatever the group needed in a given moment, rather than forcing the group to shape itself to our agenda. We would build unstructured time into the agenda to give us time 'to play with' and would also drop or move content if needs arose – for example if a conflict emerged or if people needed more time learning a section than we anticipated.

We built multiple support structures, peer-led as well as facilitator-supported, to enable different emotional and relational dynamics to emerge. We shared learnings through games, kinesthetic activities, and creative practice as well as didactically. Most importantly there was always space for people to reflect on what their own learning was, how it applied to their life or context, and what they wanted to take forward or leave behind.

The goal of the residential training was really to build unlikely relationships across the movement and to bring joy to people's experiences of learning and collectivity. While we aimed for participants to learn to use tools and strategic plans for their individual campaigns, the overarching goal internally was that over time we support the flourishing of stronger, more sustainable movements.

As the programme grew we started to mentor and train other facilitators and trainers. It quickly became apparent that we were not just asking people to deliver content but also to be aware of navigating dynamics in the room, be self-reflective insofar as their own power and identity, be able to manage conflict, and to track and support different learning styles. All the while they were also expected to hold the needs, emotions, and wellbeing of the participants. It was a lot to ask, and needed more structure.





## PRACTICAL APPROACH IN THE ROOM:

### CONTAINER-BUILDING

We spent the first four hours in a dedicated space for 'building the container' i.e. giving people the information they need to feel secure, and creating space to land and get to know each other. This would include one-minute intros, five things you need to know about Campaign Bootcamp, thinking about comfort zones, group culture settings, and icebreakers. We never did 'safe space' policies or ground rules because we wanted to think about how we do good culture and care-taking with each other, rather than how we prescribe rules and unclear / subjective expectations of each other.

Bootcamp only ever had two rules for the space which we introduced here too:

- ◆ Use everything for your learning
- ◆ Take care of yourself so that you can show up for the group

The first rule recognises that literally anything can be a learning experience: a five-minute chat you have in a corridor during break time could be as enlightening as a well planned two-hour workshop. By stating this at the very start of the training, we were opening people up to the idea of experiential learning and planting seeds for non-hierarchical, mutual learning.

The second rule acknowledged that the residential was intense, so aimed to get people thinking about their own care and how they could take ownership of that. Relationships are at the core of our methodology, and the learning builds on itself throughout the week. As such, someone missing large chunks may not only impact an individual's learnings, but also impact the group. We also wanted to acknowledge the importance of self-care as a mechanism for how we practise collective care.

### STRUCTURES IN THE ROOM

We had a variety of different group settings:

- ◆ Buddies: each participant was paired up with another participant randomly and would have check-ins together for peer support throughout the week
- ◆ Home Groups: each facilitator would have a home group daily with the same six participants to talk through learnings and group dynamics that day
- ◆ Praxis Groups: groups of about four participants to ask questions and support each other in thinking through how they would apply learnings so far to their own context / campaign in the real world

We would also always have sessions run in a mixture of small and large group formations so that people worked and connected with others in different ways in order to offer different opportunities, both lighthearted and more intense, to connect with a number of different people.

## ADAPTABILITY OF THE AGENDA

The agenda we gave to participants was very different to the one we would work from as a team. As a team we would have a detailed breakdown of sessions, breaks and so on. This agenda would also include two slots of unscheduled time throughout the week so we had 'flex' time to respond to needs that emerged in the room. The Lead Trainers would make the final call on what this time was used for.

We would give an agenda to participants that let them know the theme of a morning or afternoon, and when the lunch breaks were. This gave participants enough information to feel that they understood why we were there and what we were doing each day, while giving the team space to adapt and change things without it feeling bewildering or chaotic to participants.

We would also always plan contingencies for different access needs e.g. mobility needs, sensory needs, Blind and partially-sighted needs, d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing needs, and so on. But we would never make assumptions about what someone might want or need in a session and instead would always ask directly what a person wants in order to feel able to participate in the way that they want.

## APPROACHES TO CONFLICT

We used a transformational justice model for conflict and tried to lean into tensions and conflicts as much as possible rather than to avoid them. As we grew it became clear that the expectation on trainers and facilitators to be able to hold this in the room was substantial. As such we brought in a conflict / mediation specialist to help us, and to support mentoring of trainers / facilitators in holding groups through conflict.

## TEAM DEVELOPMENT

We had team check-ins at the end of each day to talk through dynamics that had emerged and support each other. We also built more structure as time went on for trainers and facilitators to be given one-to-one coaching through the week and to set, and work on, their own learning goals.

## CREATIVE PRACTICE, GAMES AND JOY

This was central to the Bootcamp experience. From a lip-sync battle on the final day - just for the joy of it! - through to having creative clubs throughout the week where folks could do physical or arts-based activities (drawing, subvertising, queer salsa, yoga... the list was endless!). These practices functioned as an outlet for the more serious, difficult content. They were also a means of both relating to one another and building healthy, joyful movements.

## EXPECTATIONS

No-one was expected to be present at everything, to sit still or in chairs, to engage in any particular way. People were asked to look after their own needs so that they could show up for the group. A week-long residential with strangers is a challenging and exhausting thing! We provided a quiet room near the training space so if people wanted to pop out without going too far they could, and we were always in a space surrounded by greenery. The only requests we had of folks were:

- ◆ If they were taking time out we asked that they let someone on the team know so that we didn't send out a search party
- ◆ If the way they needed to 'be' in the space was conflicting with someone else's needs we would talk about it, e.g. if someone needed to stand behind the chairs and stretch during a session, but it was making someone else uncomfortable, then we would talk about it to find a compromise. We would work through things like this together

## TRYING TO CODIFY OUR APPROACH: ABOLITION AS A FRAMEWORK

Nim says: *"I went on to build a training programme, UNPACKED, to support other trainers in practising this approach. In doing this I had to make more visible the underpinnings of the methodology.*

*The political framework which helped me to think about how to do this stuff with discipline and integrity was abolition."*

compassion for ourselves and others, moving away from punitive responses and towards responses that hold nuance, support growth, and allow for meaningful accountability. It's also about working across difference and breaking down silos.

Abolition is an everyday value and practice as much as it is a global movement – from how we reprimand children's behaviour in schools or treat a friend who said something mean, to the lack of support for people with convictions, condemning public figures for their mistakes, or even how we beat ourselves up after doing something wrong. These are all situations that could be transformed through an abolitionist lens.

## What abolition is

At its core, abolition recognises that everyone:

- ◆ has the ability to be harmed (and probably has been)
- ◆ has the ability cause harm (and probably has harmed others at some point)

and that responding to harm in punitive ways is oppressive and doesn't solve anything. It recognises that all people have value, are deserving of care and support, and that perpetuating harm should be avoided. Abolition works towards building

## How abolition is generally understood in relation to education

Abolitionists often critique education as an extension of the oppressive, carceral systems used to punish and control people. There are many comparisons between schooling and policing. Education is also discussed in abolitionist circles in the context of the importance of broadly educating about abolition – its history, values, and practices. With that said, there is currently little on the subject of how we can learn and educate more generally with an abolitionist lens.



## THE MOVEMENT ECOLOGY

### PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Supporting individual healing and learning from the traumas created by education systems. For example, working to support those who have been excluded or criminalised through their interactions with formal education. As well as creating education for people specifically about abolition – its history, values, and practices.

### CHANGING DOMINANT INSTITUTIONS

Challenging the oppressive nature of education systems e.g. work to end practices within the education system that teach through shame and competition, that create societal inequities, that support state surveillance and control (for example, the Prevent agenda). There are numerous groups working towards these things in the UK including e.g. No More Exclusions and Kids of Colour Manchester.

### PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

### CHANGING DOMINANT INSTITUTIONS

### BUILDING ALTERNATIVES

### BUILDING ALTERNATIVES

Creating alternatives to the existing system so that we develop a model of what an abolitionist education could look like when dominant, normative institutions are abolished.

## What we tried

We wanted to take an abolitionist approach to education not just as a lofty political ideal but rather, as abolitionist organiser and educator Mariame Kaba says, a practice.

In our work, we wanted to focus on the practice of abolition as it relates to how we learn together everyday.

If we have been taught that being wrong about something means that we are 'bad' then we learn not to want to admit that we don't know something, or to be accountable if we cause harm. What would it look like to explore with each other the idea that being wrong is part of a bigger picture, something that is both survivable and an opportunity to grow? What would we learn about ourselves and each other in that process? What would we get wrong and need to practise more of?

If we have learnt that the most superior form of knowledge is intellectual, then we want to affirm with each other that emotional, physical, spiritual, experiential, and relational knowledge are valuable too.

If we have learnt that we shouldn't show each other our vulnerabilities then we want to practise being more vulnerable with each other.

If we have learnt that learning should be serious and hard, then we want to uphold that joy is an important lubricant for learning, as well as an outcome of it.

We wanted to understand and create what an active abolitionist approach would mean for training - not just educating on abolition, but embodying it in all aspects of design and delivery.

To do this, we needed an approach tailored to challenging the oppressive dynamics that occur in education spaces (and that also arise in some group environments more generally).

This meant:

- ◆ Disrupting dynamics of **power and control**. The role of trainer was not to be the arbiter of justice, but to act as facilitator. It was not their role to punish behaviours or lateness, or to decide the outcomes of group conflicts
- ◆ Understanding **justice** within a training space. Moving away from the false dichotomy that 'one person is good and the other is bad', that there is always a 'right or wrong side' in a conflict, and the idea that there is 'right language' to use
- ◆ Seeing **difference as essential**. We intentionally brought a diverse range of people into a room, not excluding more societally-privileged people, as an intentional move against homogeneity. To avoid perpetuating harm in mixed identity spaces, we needed to be skilled in navigating conflict across differences. This looked different on our different programmes
  - On residentials: we had 35 people who were unlikely to work together again once the week was over. So we were trying to create the opportunity for everyone to practise different ways of being in relationship, learning, dealing with conflict and so on. The goal was not to get everyone to agree and connect completely. We called this being objective-oriented, which meant ensuring that participants were able to get the learning and experiences they came for. We weren't looking for resolution so much as trying to practise new relational skills which could be used beyond the residential
  - On our long-term programmes (see glossary): these people were actively working together on the same campaign, and would continue working together after the training was over. When conflict would arise in these spaces, there was a need to be more detail-oriented and support the group to move through the conflict, as it was essential for the health of the group and the sustainability of their campaigning
  - There is no 'one size fits all' response to conflict or harm in any setting

◆ Recognising the importance of **emotion in terms of care and sustainability**. Everyone needs joy, and movements in particular could do with more. Joy is often one of the most powerful things – it sustains us, connects us, heals us. Our centering of joy would sometimes surprise people. It is so generally undervalued and separated from our work, and we receive so many harmful messages about emotions and what ‘real work’ is, that participants would often have intense responses to this such as crying about allowing themselves to have fun

◆ Welcoming the **full range of emotions**. Humans are not simply rational. We feel a lot of (sometimes messy) feelings, and we have the capacity to feel multiple, even conflicting things at once

- We used activities that encourage people to connect with their emotional states and share their feelings.
- We did not cut off or judge anyones emotional reactions, even if they were different to how we might feel
- We pushed back against ‘serious or sad’ being the only responses considered appropriate when discussing campaigning. We actively built playfulness into our sessions

◆ Building **physicality** into the learning space also enables this e.g. activities that use singing, dancing, physical energisers, or consenting contact

- Touch is something that is often avoided (and of course should always be done consensually) but is a base human relational need. Combating a culture of emotionless touch-less-ness can be introduced through silly games or deeper, more embodied activities likewise

◆ Building sessions around the **4 Cs of care, community, challenge, creativity**: Each of these is a pillar in the practices of building a better future

- Often campaigning skills trainings would emphasise only the challenge aspect. Part of the learning we are encouraged for participants was about valuing all of the 4 Cs as key parts of sustainable campaigning, so we built their

importance into training content, how we structured the training and the physical space, how we facilitated, and the support structures we created for participants and the training team alike

### THE 4 Cs

**Care** – choosing to value care as a core element of sustainable organising

**Community** – deliberately building community amongst campaigners

**Challenge** – empowering people to challenge injustice

**Creativity** – celebrating creativity as central to inspiring campaigning

## HOW ABOLITION CAN EXIST AS AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Nim says: “I set about breaking down themes within a learning environment and how they are encoded within the formal British education system to understand it better and to imagine what a different orientation for a system of learning would look like through an abolitionist framework.”



The following exercise is imperfect and creates a damning version of existing education systems and an idealised version of abolitionist ones. The table below is intended to be illustrative of the process of conceptualisation and imagination, rather than an absolute categorisation of the two systems.

Some things we have tried to avoid implying but were challenging to delve into the nuance of in a table format are:

- ◆ In loosely defining a “formal british education system” it homogenises the education systems across 3 countries and countless counties, and invisibilises where alternative systems already exist
- ◆ It overlooks the invaluable work that many teachers and educators do within these systems
- ◆ It overlooks the work many people do to make the system work better for more people
- ◆ It could be argued to be implying that an abolitionist alternative would be easy, perfect, utopian, or even possible to fully actualise while all other social institutions and practices remain the same

FORMAL BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM	ABOLITIONIST ALTERNATIVE
<b>CENTRES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Work</li> <li>◆ Behaviour</li> <li>◆ Productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Learning</li> <li>◆ Growth</li> <li>◆ Relationship</li> <li>◆ Community</li> <li>◆ Joy</li> </ul>
<b>ORIENTATION / ASSUMPTIONS / APPROACH / PURPOSE / GOALS?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Emphasis on work</li> <li>◆ The content is the primary focus: the point is to learn x and the whole institution is built around that</li> <li>◆ Assumes that learning is individual and purely logical</li> <li>◆ Competitive system for learning outcomes</li> <li>◆ One size fits all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Individuals have to fit into the system</li> <li>– Worth of the individual is determined by how well they can fit into the system and perform</li> <li>– Little or no support to accommodate difference</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Leads to individual outcomes which shape life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Emphasis on community</li> <li>◆ Content is secondary to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dignity</li> <li>– Safety</li> <li>– Belonging</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Assumes that learning is relational and emotional</li> <li>◆ Focused on collective outcomes, and assumes that individuals need support to be part of the collective</li> <li>◆ Different needs and requirements are built into the system by design</li> <li>◆ Worth of the system is determined by how well individuals can fit into the system and perform</li> </ul>

## MODE OF JUSTICE FOR WHEN PEOPLE CAUSE HARM (WHETHER THE EDUCATORS OR THE STUDENTS)

<b>PUNITIVE:</b> YOU ARE JUDGED AND THEN PUNISHED ACCORDINGLY E.G. EXCLUSIONS, DETENTION, REMOVAL OF RIGHTS OR EMPLOYMENT		<b>TRANSFORMATIVE:</b> WE LOOK FOR HOW ACCOUNTABILITY CAN BE TAKEN, REPARATIONS MADE, AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGED	
<b>POWER</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Power is held over people hierarchically (teachers hold power over students, senior leadership holds power over teachers, boards and governments hold power over senior leadership and so on)</li><li>◆ Behaviour control</li><li>◆ Authoritarian</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Power-aware</li><li>◆ Dispersed</li><li>◆ Self-reflective</li><li>◆ Multiple axes of power</li><li>◆ Concerned with empowerment</li></ul>	
<b>EDUCATORS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Professional:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Socio-economic status a determining factor in who educates</li><li>– When more ‘diversity’ exists within educators, the system requires them to behave in ways that match the dominant culture</li></ul></li><li>◆ Have power:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Over you</li><li>– To decide</li></ul></li><li>◆ De facto ‘experts’</li><li>◆ Concerned foremost with learning goals</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Informal, human, fallible</li><li>◆ Aware of power:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Social power</li><li>– Structural power</li><li>– Lateral power</li></ul></li><li>◆ Empower rather than overpower</li><li>◆ Facilitators of learning rather than ‘experts’ (although this doesn’t mean there aren’t experts on topics to be brought in, but that the system doesn’t determine a person an expert by virtue of their position as an educator)</li><li>◆ Concerned with dignity, safety, belonging</li></ul>	
<b>ACCESS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ One size fits all approach with assumed norms</li><li>◆ Access added on to the system</li><li>◆ People who don’t learn in the way the system is designed are excluded directly or indirectly</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Integrated into the system by design</li><li>◆ Cross-needs</li><li>◆ Learning styles</li><li>◆ Emotional needs included and access understood as emotional</li><li>◆ The collective responds to requirements and needs together</li></ul>	

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**TRANSFORMATIVE:**  
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TAKEN, REPARATIONS MADE, AND BEHAVIOUR  
CHANGED

## TRAUMA

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assumed no-one has trauma unless proven otherwise</li> <li>◆ Seen as irrelevant to learning: an additional need</li> <li>◆ Deals with symptoms of trauma outside of collective space – trauma responses should be managed and suppressed because this distracts from what is considered important</li> <li>◆ Institution collaborates with criminal justice system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Trauma is assumed without need for disclosure – we all have trauma experiencing capitalism and its systemic oppressions (e.g. racism, misogyny, ableism, transphobia, poverty etc.)</li> <li>◆ Trauma-informed approach</li> <li>◆ No shame in people bringing their trauma and needs to the collective</li> <li>◆ The collective responds to requirements and needs together</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## EMBODIMENT

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Learning is thought-based, purely intellectual</li> <li>◆ Requirement to sit still</li> <li>◆ Not allowed to tend to physical needs e.g. using the bathroom, without permission</li> <li>◆ Designated times to eat, move, play</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Different types of learning understood and celebrated</li> <li>◆ People welcome to move and engage how they choose: movement, stillness, breath, creativity are supported</li> <li>◆ Movement, play, nourishment, biological needs all integrated</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## EMOTIONS

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A personal issue</li> <li>◆ A block to real learning</li> <li>◆ To be taken outside the classroom</li> <li>◆ No expectation that learning should be enjoyable</li> <li>◆ Skill is more important than joy or passion</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Integral to learning</li> <li>◆ Cause and effect of learning</li> <li>◆ All emotions are welcome</li> <li>◆ Emotions are a tool for learning – especially joy!</li> </ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## RELATIONSHIP

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Relationships are individual</li> <li>◆ They are separate from learning</li> <li>◆ They are a by-product of the environment</li> <li>◆ The teacher-student relationship is hierarchical</li> <li>◆ Teachers are governors of learning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Learning is relational</li> <li>◆ Learning is built towards a collective relational end</li> <li>◆ Both educators and students are co-learners with different expertise or experience</li> <li>◆ Teachers are facilitators of learning</li> <li>◆ Teacher-student relationship has an inherent power dynamic, which is recognised</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



**PUNITIVE:**

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**TRANSFORMATIVE:**

WE LOOK FOR HOW ACCOUNTABILITY CAN BE  
TAKEN, REPARATIONS MADE, AND BEHAVIOUR  
CHANGED

**SPIRITUALITY**

- ◆ A personal concern
- ◆ Christian Church and British Government bound together resulting in assemblies, services etc.
- ◆ Alternative, organised faith spaces / schools permitted
- ◆ Faith and spirituality are something to study objectively

- ◆ Integrated into the system
- ◆ Non-institutionalised
- ◆ Defined by a position that we all have a connection to something beyond ourselves (e.g. our ancestors, land, or G/god(s))
- ◆ Space for our faith / spiritualities / connectedness to be part of what guides us through learning
- ◆ Non-objective

**CONFLICT**

- ◆ Debate encouraged, but within a set criteria of expected behaviours and emotions
- ◆ Punishment
- ◆ What happened, not why
- ◆ Avoided
- ◆ Seen as a symptom of dysfunction

- ◆ Conflict is inevitable
- ◆ Seen as important for collective function and individual needs to air it
- ◆ Connected to negotiating trauma, access, different needs, emotions and experiences around them
- ◆ Leaned into
- ◆ Engaged and viewed in the positive: conflict begets the possibility for transformation
- ◆ Systemic analysis

**LEARNING**

- ◆ One size fits all (or special needs / add-on support)
- ◆ Individual
- ◆ Didactic
- ◆ Quantitatively and competitively measured
- ◆ Goal-oriented (e.g. 'this is what you should learn from this lesson')
- ◆ Seen as rational, logic-based
- ◆ Superiority of intellectualism

- ◆ Integrative: the goal is that someone learns what's important for them
- ◆ Different types of learning for different things e.g. how to change a tyre vs. how to write a song
- ◆ Learning is primarily emotional and relational:
  - We all have a need for dignity, safety, and belonging
  - Multiple learning styles
  - Multiple group formations
- ◆ Space for the learning not to be the lesson goal
- ◆ Peer learning and multiple reflection, application, and support systems built into the learning process

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**TRANSFORMATIVE:**

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TAKEN, REPARATIONS MADE, AND BEHAVIOUR  
CHANGED

**KNOWLEDGE**

- ◆ Primacy of the intellectual
- ◆ Perceived objectivity
- ◆ Rationality as superior

- ◆ Equitable relationship between different forms of knowledge:
  - Experiential
  - Emotional
  - Spiritual
  - Physical
  - Embodied
  - Intellectual
- ◆ Knowledge is rarely objective
- ◆ Assumed subjectivity of all learners and educators
- ◆ All knowledge is contextual: culture-specific, time-specific

**JOY**

- ◆ A hope
- ◆ An added bonus
- ◆ Immature
- ◆ Irrational
- ◆ An extracurricular activity

- ◆ Prefigurative, the ultimate goal - for all people
- ◆ An emotional channel to deal with difficult emotions
- ◆ Joy for its own sake
- ◆ A tool for re-learning the body as a site of dignity, safety, and belonging
- ◆ In relation to a trauma-informed approach, a way to re-learn the body as a site not forged in pain

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CHANGED

**OUTCOMES: NEGATIVE**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Competition and shame</li><li>◆ Work paths linked to education performance</li><li>◆ A focus on being right / wrong</li><li>◆ Links to the carceral state</li><li>◆ People find it hard to show vulnerability or take responsibility when causing harm</li><li>◆ Many of us internalise thoughts of not being good enough</li><li>◆ Capitalist white supremacist patriarchal ableist cis-heteronormativity: people are excluded from society and their wisdom isn't shared</li><li>◆ We don't benefit from the knowledge and wisdom in our own communities</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Things take longer sometimes</li><li>◆ Outcomes aren't clear</li><li>◆ You can't make a decision for everybody from far away without understanding the context</li><li>◆ Takes a lot of effort on everybody's part - everybody has to be bought in</li><li>◆ In the meantime, it takes more and a larger diversity of resources to do stuff and can be emotionally taxing</li></ul> |
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**OUTCOMES: POSITIVE**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ It's more easily measurable:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— you can measure people individually via attainment and grading</li><li>— and collectively such as via school performance</li></ul></li><li>◆ Easy measurement provides an easier system for resource distribution e.g. distribution of money to schools based on performance</li><li>◆ Transmits cultural norms and specific national beliefs very well for a coherent shared identity (you know whether you're inside or outside of the acceptable norms very easily)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ People actually integrate what they learn as opposed to just memorising information</li><li>◆ Learning is applied to what's relevant in people's lives</li><li>◆ Tools and approaches that can be adapted to meet the moment and thus support greater resilience and responsive behaviour</li><li>◆ Community and collective development is the focus</li><li>◆ Work paths linked to pursuit of joy and purpose</li><li>◆ Conflict is seen as a healthy part of societies and cultures</li><li>◆ Built towards dignity, safety, and belonging for all</li><li>◆ Opportunity to draw wisdom and knowledge from a multitude of sources</li></ul> |
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## BUILDING LIFE-AFFIRMING INSTITUTIONS

*"Abolition is about presence, not absence. It's about building life-affirming institutions."*

**Ruth Wilson Gilmore**

### Our Institution: root to shoots

We developed the 4 Cs as a framework to hold our practice of abolition to account in all areas of the institution we were building:

#### WHO IT'S DESIGNED FOR

We made a transition with this over time, away from digital-first campaigners and towards folks working towards social justice who don't otherwise have access to learning spaces, networks or connections to wider movements. We did this in a number of ways including dedicated outreach and community support teams, tailoring the learning journey and content, and building networks. We also created a scholarship model in which over 80% of places were funded by trusts, foundations or NGOs who sponsored a place for specific types of campaigners (e.g. Greenpeace sponsoring a place for environmental justice campaigners).

#### THE FULL JOURNEY

The learning experience starts from the moment someone has contact with you. We considered people's dignity, safety, and belonging from the moment of outreach through to being a member of our alumni community. For example, before the training we would have one-to-one phone conversations with participants to check in how they were feeling and whether they had any questions or access requirements before arriving at camps. For virtual events we would offer to buy internet access, phone data, or sometimes even laptops for folks who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend.

#### TRAINERS AND EDUCATORS

Our assumption is that trainers and educators, like participants, are always in a state of learning, practice, and development. Over time we built structures to support their learning and put in place emotional support structures to acknowledge that their work is a form of care work as care workers need to be cared for too.

## THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

We would only use physical spaces which were accessible for mobility needs and which were willing to let us make adaptations they hadn't considered. We would always have or make gender neutral toilets. We looked for venues with good light, green space and good food to nourish us all on our learning journeys. We wanted lots of space for different group formations and types of activities e.g. the ability to have a slideshow presentation at one moment, build a rainforest environment for a learning game the next, and space for lip-syncing later. We also always made space for a quiet room in which we would dim lights, with sensory aids such as colouring books and fidget toys, political books, essential oils, bean bags and fairy lights. It was important that people could take time out whenever they liked.

## THE CONTENT

The content was always adapted to think about what was needed by folks most in this moment. There were some tools which stayed consistent throughout such as power maps, messaging, and the spectrum of allies. But other content shifted over time: how to build websites, how to write compelling e-mails, self and collective care, how to tend to the dynamics of your group, developing boundaries in storytelling etc.

## THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology is focused on building relationships and a container of trust as quickly as possible. We wanted to focus on people finding the learnings in the room that are most relevant to them. We had different group structures (buddy pairs, home groups, praxis groups) to support emotional and experiential learning. We focused on learning as an emotional, relational, spiritual, physical and experiential process, as well as an intellectual one.

## THE MONEY

We needed a lot of money to make a lot of this possible: to pay staff, to cover scholarships, to hire venues that met our needs etc. With the charity taking care of the fundraising, we as trainers didn't need to worry about the money. Generally, this worked well for us, allowing us to focus on the things we were good at and wanted to think about.

There were issues, however. There was some tensions insofar as how much money we had and where it was coming from. And there was also the distinction of the training team being accountable to the social justice landscape and communities we served, while the charity was accountable principally to its funder. And ultimately, with our programmes and the charity bound together, the organisation's downfall meant the untimely collapse of the learning programmes with no real time or money to salvage them.

## JUSTICE

All institutions have their own process for managing what happens when things go wrong. We tried to build ours around a transformative justice model - seeing the grey rather than the black and white when harm is done. Focusing on accountability rather than punishment. We certainly didn't always do it well, but we held a commitment to justice that leads to learning and growth.

## WHAT'S OUR PRACTICE AND OUR PROCESS?

*"I see abolition as a process and a practice more than I do a destination."*

**Mariame Kaba**

If abolition is our orientation and lays the foundations of our approach to learning, then we need to create a system for **how** we learn. What does an approach that centres collective joy and growth look like?

Most of our work on this was developed in practice, iterated over time. It was influenced heavily by Nim and Anna's previous experiences as well as by all the trainers and facilitators who worked with us on the programmes.



as educators and lifelong learners everything we built was informed, influenced and inspired by those that came before us, and those that work alongside us. We could write a whole nother report on all those whose wisdom, thought and practices have shaped us but for now, we'd like to note some particular influences and teachings that shaped our work:

- ◆ The study of transformative justice and abolition, e.g. Incite!, Bent Bars and Paula Rojas' *Are the Cops in our Heads and Hearts?*, Mariame Kaba, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore.
- ◆ Disability Justice e.g, Eli Clare, *Sins Invalid*.
- ◆ bell hooks' writings on community education.
- ◆ Studies in permaculture principles such as fractals, living at the edges and working from patterns to details. One of the spaces Nim learnt about this was on a social movements permaculture course run by LABOFIL.
- ◆ The practice of Somatics including Staci. K. Haines framework of "belonging, safety, dignity" as core values that we all need and deserve.
- ◆ Training for Change's methodology had a significant impact on Bootcamp's training methodology over time with particular thanks to Niko Amador, Matthew Armstead, Erika Thorne, Andrew Wilis Garcès and Celia Kutz for their mentorship and guidance.
- ◆ Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

For this report Nim has tried to define these processes. While they were at the heart of our approach, they weren't codified in this way in our practices while running Bootcamp or UNPACKED:

Nim set out to define:

- ◆ How we did the **practice and process** of an abolitionist orientation to learning, which we've called **Integrative Learning**
- ◆ The assumptions we have about the **pre-conditions needed to learn** which need to be tended to in a group environment to support people to find dignity, safety, belonging, and to access meaningful learning. We've called this **The Learning Ecology**.

The next two sections will explain what we mean by Integrative Learning and The Learning Ecology.



# Integrative Learning

Having considered how abolition can exist as an alternative system, the challenge becomes how we practice it in real life.

The combination of theory and practice outlined thus far culminated into our methodology, Integrative Learning. We didn't develop this in a vacuum, we practised everything we'd learnt so far in our practice as educators and activists: principles of abolition, popular education, and experiential learning. As we developed and delivered trainings, we also continued to develop our approach. In this section we will lay out how we did so, and what it looks like in practice.

## WHERE WE STARTED

When we started building the new curriculum for Campaign Bootcamp, Anna used experiential learning and popular education as the basis of her methodology, which she learnt while training with Training for Change.

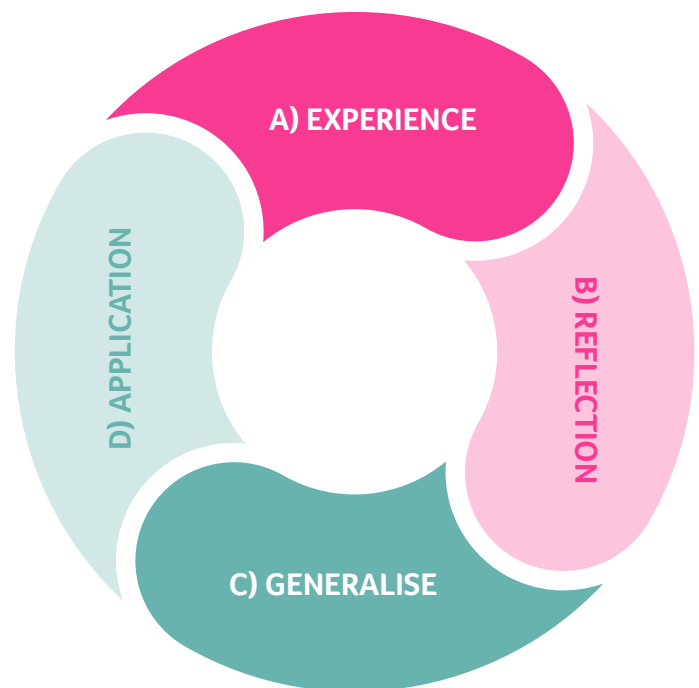
## WHAT IS POPULAR EDUCATION?

Popular education is a people-oriented approach to education. Its development is often attributed to Brazilian educator Paulo Friere. It is an approach that values the experiences and wisdom of all people. It affirms that experience is knowledge, and aims to draw out the participants' expertise by relating their own experiences to whatever is being taught. In recognising that everyone has relevant wisdom and allowing participants to become contributors throughout, we can disrupt the hierarchical teacher-student power dynamic. At its core, popular education aims to be anti-oppressive, dynamic, inclusive, and joyful. It also recognises that there are many types of wisdom and helps us welcome emotional, embodied, spiritual, and experiential wisdom into our learning.

## WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Experiential learning is a belief that as humans we are in a constant cycle of learning through the experiences we have everyday.

American educator David Kolb developed a framework, the action learning cycle, in order to break down the steps of how this happens so that it's replicable in educational settings. This was a key tool in the development of session plans and curriculum at Campaign Bootcamp. Activities, as far as possible and appropriate, would be structured around the experiential learning cycle:



First you **do / experience** something, then you **reflect** on it, then you **generalise** from it, then you apply **the learning**.

The experience could be something that has happened in the past to the group as individuals, e.g. asking them to “recall a time when you learned something growing up”, or it could be a new

experience that we create and the group engages with together, e.g. setting up and playing a game together.

For example, at the Bootcamp Residential the 'rainforest game' is a session about strategy. The aim is for the participants to understand the distinctions between a goal, objectives, and tactics. Very briefly, the arc of the session is the following:

- ◆ **Do:** play a game where each team tries to achieve the secret task they are given, such as 'get all of the red sweets' or 'make sure everyone is hydrated'. None of the tasks conflict with each other, but groups tend to naturally perceive them this way and trust is low between groups. For about ten minutes people move around the room trying to achieve their objective (dressed as rainforest animals!). The experience of chaos in the room means they rarely take a strategic approach (despite two days of workshops on how to be strategic preceding the game!) but instead defer to "trying to get it done" without a plan or collective approach
- ◆ **Reflect:** once the game is finished, the teams debrief on how the game went, what they actually did during the time, how they achieved (or tried to achieve) their task, and what it felt like
- ◆ **Generalise:** the teams are supported by facilitators to work out what their goal was (the task), their objectives (whatever was on their list of things they did that was an achievable step en route to their goal) and their tactics (how they tried to make their objectives happen). They are asked, if they had sat down to make a strategy before, how might they have played the game differently?
- ◆ **Apply:** participants apply the goal / objective / tactics labels to their own campaign and think about how they might act more strategically in their own campaigning work

The emphasis in this cycle is primarily that participants learn through doing, thereby working things out for themselves rather than just being told things.

We used this as the basis of our content design in all of our programmes and training as it is an important way to shift the power dynamics in the room to focus learning on an individual's experience and reality.

These were our two main educational lineages that we started working with. Based on our content and experiences, as well as an abolitionist approach, we started to adapt and iterate how we understood education and learning. This led to Integrative Learning.

## OUR METHODOLOGY: INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

Learning methodologies are underpinned by the philosophies, politics, and values that educators hold about what learning is, what education's purpose is and how people learn best.

**Integrative Learning:** Is an approach to learning which develops learning content to be relevant to people within their own context, which takes into account how people show up in a learning environment (rather than expecting them to conform or perform being a certain type of learner) and which provides learning in a way in which it can be integrated into people's lives.

**What learning is:** learning happens all the time through our experiences with each other. It happens in dialogue, disagreement, and discovery. It can be emotional, relational, spiritual, embodied, intellectual. We are informed by *experiential learning* in this belief.

**What is its purpose:** To support us all in finding dignity, safety, and belonging as individuals and collectives of people. Abolition provides our framework for what we believe that means.

- ◆ Community and collective development is the focus
- ◆ Conflict is seen as a healthy part of societies and cultures
- ◆ Build towards dignity, safety, and belonging for all
- ◆ Opportunity to draw wisdom and knowledge from a multitude of places instead of only one source of wealth, politics etc.
- ◆ People actually integrate what they learn and remember it as opposed to just memorising information
- ◆ Learning is applied to what's relevant in people's lives
- ◆ Not just one set of static information that's responding to the moment in time it's created, but the content develops and responds to the moment in time as well as when, where, and who you are with. The group is therefore more resilient and responsive
- ◆ Work paths linked to pursuit of joy and purpose

**How people learn best:** Our philosophy on how people learn best then is that we need to equitably balance different forms of knowledge within learning; experiential, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical and so on. In doing so, more people are able to access the learning and more wisdom is able to be shared. We become enabled to build deeper relationships to ourselves and each other across differences, diversities and demographics. People learn best when we accept people in their fullness as learners and attend to dynamics of power, access, trauma, knowledge, and justice in the learning environment. We call this the learning ecology. We are heavily informed by popular education in this belief.

## HOW WE DID THIS

Our guiding question to keep us focused on Integrative Learning as educators was “are the participants finding the learning they need?”

### Content

The aim was always to make accessible, challenging content. We designed primarily around effective and strategic campaigning, which we reviewed every few months and adapted to trends and needs we saw emerging in social justice movements.

Amongst others, this included tools and exercises like:

- ◆ Power mapping
- ◆ Spectrum of allies
- ◆ Campaign strategy 101
- ◆ Theory of change
- ◆ Task and maintenance in group dynamics
- ◆ Story of Self
- ◆ How to write campaign e-mails
- ◆ Using social media
- ◆ Understanding conflict
- ◆ How to make a smartphone video
- ◆ A scenario exercise in which groups would run a campaign together with a new scenario to respond to each day of the boot camp





We also developed content which would enable us to open up reflective conversations about dynamics within our movements, campaign groups, and the training room we are in. For example, in running a session on considering boundaries in storytelling for campaigns we were able to provide participants with tools which they could use when running their campaigns. But the topic was also a prompt to explore nuances and dynamics such as:

- ◆ Those who are here because they campaign for their own safety such as asylum seekers, and those who campaign using the stories of others
- ◆ How power manifests in these dynamics and in this room
- ◆ How to make space for our emotional selves when trying to run campaigns
- ◆ How activists can sometimes stake their emotional wellbeing on the success of their campaigns, and how to build other support structures around us to balance that
- ◆ How to practice having difficult conversations with each other

- ◆ How to be careful and caring with each others' vulnerability
- ◆ How to coach and support each other, whether that's in using campaign tools or in holding and processing strong emotions

## Delivery

We focused on impact and the overall learning goal. The impact we aimed for was the emergence of more powerful and effective social movements, and the learning goal was to support the development of the skills, confidence, and relationships relevant to participants in the campaigning.

We delivered this content as a week-long curriculum to 35 people from very different political and socio-economic backgrounds. The content is the shared vehicle of everyone's learning, and there is also the complicated nexus of experiences which might be about the emotional, relational, spiritual, intellectual, physical experiences being had in the space.



## AN EXAMPLE: POWER-MAPPING WORKSHOP

<p><b>Have a trainer and a number of facilitators who are activists and campaigners themselves. Usually folks who have marginalised identities at more than one intersection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Having people with power over our learning who aren't often perceived as "experts" but who have first-hand experience as activists supports empowering those who have experienced education in a white, cis-heteronormative, patriarchal education system. It also challenges those in movements who don't often experience this to experience a room where power dynamics are different to those of the world outside</li> <li>◆ Examples of how tools can be applied to real-life campaigning context so that learning doesn't remain theoretical</li> <li>◆ Multiple facilitators in the room means folks can develop support relationships with whoever they feel more comfortable with, and support is more readily available</li> <li>◆ Facilitators understand that they may need to offer support in relation to the learning itself, or for the different emotional, relational, physical experiences folks are having in the room</li> </ul>
<p><b>Present the tool with an example</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Make it simple and accessible</li> <li>◆ Use an example so that people can conceptualise how it works and why</li> </ul>
<p><b>Give folks a moment to write down on post-it notes all the groups they think will appear in a power map and start to stick them on a flipchart. Facilitators float to support people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Allow folks to move to wherever they want in the room with their flipchart and post-its – people who like quiet self-reflection have an opportunity to collect their thoughts. People who prefer to process audibly or with others are able to group together and do that, but an unspoken social contract is that they should do it without disturbing those working alone</li> <li>◆ Facilitators are on-hand to support everyone whether in relation to understanding the tool / exercise, or in relation to experiences in the room</li> </ul>
<p><b>Put folks into small groups to share and support each other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activists get to learn more and become more invested in one other's campaigns</li> <li>◆ They help each other (rather than via "an expert") to consider how they can be most impactful in power-mapping</li> <li>◆ This supports them to learn the tool more deeply, seeing it used in multiple contexts as well as supporting each other to use it effectively</li> <li>◆ Relationships are forged which may continue beyond the training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Facilitators float to support people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ If conflict or relational dynamics emerge there are folks on-hand to support</li> <li>◆ Support with deeper learning</li> </ul>

## AN EXAMPLE: POWER-MAPPING WORKSHOP (CONTINUED)

<b>Group discussion about how the exercise went</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The reflection and generalisation part of the experiential learning cycle</li> <li>◆ Often starts with the question “how are you feeling now?” or “how was that?” in order to invite any kind of reflection from the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hard – my group wouldn’t listen to me</li> <li>– It made me realise i know more than I think about this</li> <li>– I found it hard to define power</li> <li>– I realised I’m wasting my time with my current approach</li> <li>– I’m still struggling honestly, I don’t think I quite understand it</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ We then use that to create a supported conversation for both the group (focusing on collective learning) as well as the individual (facilitators will follow up with them after as well as in the group)</li> <li>◆ We will often ask the group if they have answers or reflections to share with the person commenting before we jump in</li> </ul>
<b>Self-reflection: how will you use these learnings in your campaigning?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The application part of the action learning cycle: thinking about how they will actually take their learnings back into their campaign life</li> </ul>
<b>Activist storytelling and panel discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In another session we would bring in activists to do storytelling drawing on their own real-life campaigns to reinforce the learning</li> <li>◆ These would be campaigns relevant to movement dynamics in the present (some were more historic campaigns to learn from)</li> <li>◆ Bringing in outside voices intended to inspire, challenge, and provide critical engagement with wider movements</li> </ul>
<b>Praxis groups later in the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A space for participants to talk with others later in the day specifically about how to use the learnings in practice in their campaign</li> <li>◆ Builds trust and relationships between activists</li> <li>◆ Provides practice in supporting each other’s campaigns</li> <li>◆ Develops more awareness of each other’s campaigns</li> <li>◆ Develops empathy across the movement(s)</li> <li>◆ Hopefully folks learn they know more than they think when they try to help each other</li> </ul>
<b>Home groups later in the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pastoral support space with a facilitator to support participants in processing emotions and learnings from the day</li> <li>◆ Answer any follow-up questions on the learning</li> <li>◆ Develop relationships between activists across the movement(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict support, buddies etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Multiple group structures such as home groups, buddies, conflict support, praxis groups in place to support people to reflect on the different learnings they encountered during the sessions</li> </ul>

## Integrative learning: embracing different learning experiences

Integrative Learning is about building a learning environment which accepts people's individual realities and works to integrate them into the learning process, while delivering content which is meaningfully integrated into each person's life.

By nature, people will have different learning experiences. In the example of the power-mapping training outcomes might be that:

- ◆ Some will learn how to use the power-mapping tool
- ◆ Some will learn how to use the tool differently than they have before
- ◆ Some will learn their preferred way to categorise group types as they consider who can influence their campaign
- ◆ Some will learn they hate a particular texture or smell of a permanent marker pen
- ◆ Some will think about a different cultural

context in which they campaigned and how the approach, resources or process compare

- ◆ Some will learn they don't like to be taught physical activities by men
- ◆ Some will learn something about their relationship to groups
- ◆ Some will learn something about their relationship with an individual they are trying to work with
- ◆ Some will learn about something going on for them that has nothing to do with the class
- ◆ Some will learn a new joke
- ◆ Many will learn a combination of the above, and more

We see and appreciate that diversity of experience. It is not a distraction or disturbance in the learning environment, but central to it. In order to achieve our intended impact and reach our learning goals, we tailor our responses to people's experiences to guide them towards those learnings.

EXPERIENCE	LEARNING
The experience someone might have in our power mapping workshop	The way we might respond to that experience in the learning environment as we are guided by our <b>learning goals</b> (skills, confidence and relationships) and the <b>impact we intend to have</b> (stronger and more effective social movements)
Some will learn how to use the power-mapping tool	Brilliant! We hope that this will help them to identify levers of power and how to pull them with least energy for maximum effect. We also hope if they understand and integrate it, they will help other people in their groups and networks to use it too
Some will learn how to use the tool differently than they have before	Excellent – we hope this will provide new insights, and reinvigorate their thinking on power and strategic activism
Some will learn their preferred way to categorise group types as they consider who can influence their campaign	Great – we love when people reflect analytically on their context and environment and find patterns and systems that work for them to deepen their understanding of their context. We hope there might also be some self-discovery in this on how they like to learn and process information



<b>EXPERIENCE</b> The experience someone might have in our power mapping workshop	<b>LEARNING</b> The way we might respond to that experience in the learning environment as we are guided by our <b>learning goals</b> (skills, confidence and relationships) and the <b>impact we intend to have</b> (stronger and more effective social movements)
<b>Some will learn they hate the texture or smell of a permanent marker pen</b>	Awesome – physical self-discovery is great. We will offer them a different pen if they prefer. Touch, taste, smell, sight and sound can all be crucial elements in how people are able to be present in learning, or serve as activators for learning recall. This might seem like an aside to the session, but for this person it might be a really important part of their process to have comrades extend care to them, or just listen to them at this moment
<b>Some will think about a different cultural context in which they campaigned and how the approach, resources or process compare</b>	Excellent – bringing in our experience is super important for deep learning. This will hopefully open up questions about how content alters our relationships to power (and power-mapping). This can be important experience-based knowledge for the group as well as the individual
<b>Some will learn they don't like to be taught physical activities by men</b>	Amazing – we support someone to consider how their relationship to this (whether it's about gender, trauma, learning styles etc.) affects their relationships in their campaigning life, or how our relationships and performances of gender affect our social movements
<b>Some will learn something about their relationship to groups</b>	Fantastic – some of us like to hold back, some of us are really energised by group work, some of us are scared in groups, some of us really like to wrangle a group. Our movements need all of us, and to embrace all of us. What are our individual learnings about how we like to be? How does this show up in the power dynamics of movements? How can we work together in that self-actualisation to build the power of our movements?
<b>Some will learn something about their relationship with an individual they are trying to work with</b>	Awesome – maybe there's a lifelong friendship forged, or a new relationship with an activist who challenges our own perspective in a way we find uncomfortable but exciting. Maybe we get into conflict with each other and practise a way of working through that as a group. We might try to support someone to voice their feelings – positive, negative or otherwise to another person and support them in leaning into that vulnerability. It's good practice for healthy relationships outside of this space
<b>Some will learn about something going on for them that has nothing to do with the class</b>	Great – we will provide them whatever support we can with that. For this week at least, we are in a community of people trying to practise an empowering way of being in movements together. We want people to feel cared for, because they are cared for
<b>Some will learn a new joke</b>	Amazing! How do we integrate jokes, humour and laughter into our campaigning life so that we are building towards joy and not despair!?

## HOW WE EVALUATE SUCCESS

With such a broad vision for education and a more holistic appraisal of what learning is, success becomes much harder to define. Rejecting the standardised testing and memorisation that are hallmarks of formal education, here are the markers we looked for with our approach to Integrative Learning.

	FORMAL EDUCATION	INTEGRATIVE LEARNING
<b>Input</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Educators deliver content to learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Educators facilitate a learning ecology</li> </ul>
<b>Output</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Learners can recite the thing they were told</li> <li>◆ Learners can analyse the thing they were told</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Participants have developed skills, confidence and relationships relevant to their campaigning life</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Both the learner and the educator are assessed by how well the learner can recite or analyse the content within a specific period of time or in the context of a test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Participants are impacted by the learning experience they've had and are able to generalise the experiences to shift the way that they show up in social movements or run campaigns in their lives.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Some amount of knowledge has been transferred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Stronger movement culture – especially around dignity, safety, belonging and more active solidarity</li> </ul>
<b>Measurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Individual: Exams, tests, essays</li> <li>◆ System: School / regional trends of aggregated test results, league tables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Individual: participants report impact of the training on their skills, confidence and relationship at 1, 3, 6 and 12-month intervals after the training</li> <li>◆ System: solidarity and relationship building across and within social movements. Bolder, more strategic campaigns</li> </ul>

# Notes from our trainers

## Tips for other trainers...

Be a constant student and be open to receiving wisdom from multiple sources: grassroots activists, corporate training, group coaching, retreats, online programmes, creative workshops, yoga, etc. Use everything for your own learning to expand the box of tools you can use to benefit others.

When training participants and the learning is starting to land but doesn't seem like it has completely, remember that real change and transformation happen outside the training room. You are one of many pairs of hands moulding change and participants in turn are also moulding you. It is incremental. It's not about a single moment in the training room but a series of cumulative moments of a person's life. "All that you touch / You Change. / All that you Change / Changes you. / The only lasting truth / Is Change. / God / Is Change." - Octavia Butler

**Understand power!**  
What power do you have formally, socially and laterally? What is your relationship to power? How does it make you feel when you have it, and how does that affect your relationships with other people?

**Have a go! Watch how others do it, learn new ideas, and develop your own style. Be steeped in values and integrity for the service you are providing, and be clear on your outcomes. Make time for reflection and be prepared to change what you had planned! Emergent design!**

**Find out how you like to learn best.**

Throw out the school rulebook! You will have learned things about education from being in a school system which (if that was in the UK at least) ignores so much about how people meaningfully learn. People need fun, creativity, connections, care, joy etc. to learn.

# The Learning Ecology: the social context in which people learn

The role of the facilitator isn't just to deliver the content, it's also to tend to the dynamics of the group including:

- ◆ Power
- ◆ Emotions
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Role as educator
- ◆ Embodiment
- ◆ Spirituality
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Conflict
- ◆ Access
- ◆ Trauma
- ◆ Knowledge
- ◆ Joy
- ◆ Learning
- ◆ Learning environment

When I'm training other trainers, I try to build their awareness of these dynamics and how they interrelate and show up for different folks. In paying attention to these dynamics, it's not just about observing them, but helping to shape them towards positive relationships rather than negative ones.

The next page shows an illustration of the different dynamics we trained trainers and facilitators to pay attention to within the learning environment. In the above table they appear as separate dynamics, but in reality they are interdependent dynamics within a complex ecology.





# THE LEARNING ECOLOGY



## POWER

**TRAUMA:** misuse of power can trigger trauma, learning to responsibly hold power that is freely given and shared can be healing

**KNOWLEDGE:** power is enacted when a singular form of knowledge is utilised, whereas power is shared with multiple forms of knowledge given space

**ROLE OF EDUCATOR:** many of our trainers and facilitators are people of marginalised identities at more than one intersection and aren't practised at holding power over others. Not recognising the power they hold as trainers / facilitators can lead to irresponsible use of power. Practising responsible use of power in a specific role can transform our ideas of ourselves and build our power collectively

**EMOTIONS:** it's emotional to have power, it's emotional not to have power. Building emotional literacy around power and understanding the way power and emotions exist within us can build us towards far more powerful movements

**RELATIONSHIPS:** relationships are determined by power whether because we are peers, because of social dynamics, or because of power dynamics within the room. Relationships also create lateral power e.g. whose opinion gets repeated by others. How do we tend to and nurture social dynamics, while being aware of power and building stronger movements?

**ACCESS:** power is enacted in who can / can't access a learning space and whose needs are catered to. We can challenge ableism, classism, racism and other forms of oppression by addressing the power maintained by intentional and unintentional exclusion in a learning space

**CONFLICT:** power can prevent and / or enable people to engage in conflict. Healthy engagement in conflict builds our collective power and enables us to do more together

## ROLE OF EDUCATOR

**KNOWLEDGE:** 'experts' are decentred as authorities, but not dismissed Expertise is not only about intellectual knowledge but also emotional, experiential, relational, spiritual, and embodied knowledge

**LEARNING:** the role of educator is to facilitate both individual and collective learning

**RELATIONSHIPS:** the role of the educator is to tend to the health of the group

**POWER:** the role of the educator is to support people's needs in finding dignity, safety, and belonging

## TRAUMA

**EMBODIMENT:** trauma shows up in the body as well as the head and heart. We can build in physical ways of engaging in learning spaces which support people to be present such as a care space with sensory aids, movement-based activities etc.

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** like the content, the physical spaces we learn in can also be triggering. We can make conscious choices about the environments we create that take into account people's experiences of institutionalisation, as well as the importance of rest and nature

**ACCESS:** trauma can create access needs and can be created by access needs not being met. Building trauma-informed spaces means building access

**CONFLICT:** can activate trauma responses such as fight / flight / freeze / fawn. Being trauma-informed helps us to navigate conflict together to build stronger and smarter social movements

**POWER:** trauma can manifest in behaviours of wanting to be rescued, to rescue, to want control in the space, to give away control and agency etc. Being trauma-informed helps us to challenge our relationship to power in service of building our collective power and empowerment

## ACCESS

**TRAUMA:** if needs aren't met, this can be traumatising or trigger trauma responses. Building accessible spaces helps us tend to individuals' needs and we hope helps to heal trauma

**POWER:** who the space and learning are made for can denote social power. By tending to access we build social movements which centre everyone's participation - that is how we win

**CONFLICT:** if space isn't accessible it can determine whether people are able to participate equally in learning that relates to conflict or in conflict situations

**EMBODIMENT:** embodied practice and embodiment should be led by disability justice principles

The assumption in Integrative Learning is that when you tend to this ecology – learning follows!

# What worked and what didn't

It became clear over time that at least some of what we were doing was working! Evaluations of our trainings showed that 6-12 months after attending a training, activists and campaigners still felt more confident and knowledgeable in their action for change. Cross-issue, cross-identity relationships developed and flourished inside and outside of the training spaces – both through the active and engaged community of alumni we built, and also independently of Campaign Bootcamp's support. In addition, folks from many different social and political backgrounds attended our events, workshops and social spaces and showed real commitment to what we were doing. Attendees would often say how they had never experienced a space like the ones we were offering. Folks who'd been through our programmes would also regularly want to volunteer or apply for jobs with us. We also built up a number of facilitators and trainers over the years who were committed to our vision and practice – working together to constantly iterate, improve, and grow our work as educators for social movements.

We certainly didn't get everything right though, and always tried to be accountable and learn from mistakes. I'm sure we didn't do this perfectly, For now, I've tried to summarise the three biggest learning points over the years:

## **1 THE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR TEAM BETTER**

Initially we expected trainers to hold too much without enough support. We were demanding so much of ourselves in service to the groups we were holding, and we demanded too much of those who joined our team too. It was unfair to expect trainers and facilitators to be able to hold a methodology

that tries to attend to complex social dynamics like conflict, power and accessibility, without heavily investing in learning and support structures for the team.

When you understand learning to be emotional and relational, the role of an educator extends far beyond delivering content – it is care work. Care work is often invisibilised, taxing labour. People don't often notice how much you are giving of yourself in service to other people, but always notice if you haven't tended to every need, or if you make a mistake. We needed to build much more structure and care, support and development of training and facilitation teams



## 2 CONSENT FOR OUR METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

When bringing people into a learning environment in which they are opting to learn about campaign strategy tools, there is a big question of consent. All the more so in the context of tending to social dynamics, relationships, and conflict.

We explicitly used transformative justice as our modus operandi for conflict in the space. This means we rarely ever told someone their behaviour or opinion was “wrong” but rather worked with them and others affected to deepen understanding and find collectivised approaches to accountability – including acknowledging our own accountability as the people who hold most power in the space.

Similarly, people are conditioned to come to the “teacher” to ask them to intervene when people are behaving in ways they don’t like. It’s our belief that this doesn’t serve our movements – we should be in solidarity with each other, but not act as saviours. Our methodological approach is to empower the person to speak up for themselves, so our first response was usually to consider how we could support the person to name their need or request to the group or individual concerned. We would never leave the issue unaddressed if a person wasn’t able to do this in that moment, but we always tried to support the learning edge of leaning into naming needs and overcoming aversions to conflict. This was always a tricky line to balance as we held a lot of power in the space. As such, we always tried to approach this process with self-awareness and a keen attention to not reinforcing dominant cultures.

One of the trickiest dynamics in this methodology is that people walk into a training room with a set of conscious or unconscious assumptions about how educators should respond to different types of behaviour. We have all learnt in our educational experiences to expect certain rules to apply which we assume other people understand and want to comply with.

Participants didn’t explicitly sign up for the kind of relational and social learning space we intended to create and that always creates an uncomfortable tension in regards to consent and how much you should or shouldn’t push people’s learning edges or needs around conflict, support and relationship building.

## 3 MONEY AND THE CHARITY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

We wanted to build a space that was genuinely accessible to all people, and that built care structures for participants and team members alike. Providing resources with intention came with a high price tag. Accordingly, we built our training practice onto / within a charity that was able to fundraise that kind of money. This worked for us while it worked, and I would hazard a guess we were the best-resourced training programme for activists in the UK for a number of years. However it was also ultimately the downfall of the training programme. When the crisis of organisational toxicity within the larger charity became too great, the organisation folded. This was bittersweet as the training programmes’ methodology, vision and community were in the best place they’d ever been. Ultimately, by hitching our wagon to the charity industrial complex, our programmes were then at the mercy of an institution which did not practise the things the trainers spent so many years educating on. The environment became hostile and unbearable, and with the folding of the organisation, our programmes have collapsed too.

# Considerations for designing liberatory learning spaces: what we actually did!

## POWER DYNAMICS / ANTI-OPPRESSION

### How we see the world (and the movement)

Education isn't inherently oppressive but it is often carried out oppressively. It is one of many systems that can be used to perpetuate harmful power dynamics. Beyond how we tried to minimise the student-teacher power dynamic as a form of anti-oppression, there were also power dynamics at work between participants in the group. We celebrate that each individual brings their own socialisation into any space. We also recognise that people are socialised by society's injustices.

We deliberately sought out people with marginalised identities to be in our cohorts, so as a training team we expected societal injustices to show up and play out. We expected all of the -isms to show up at sessions because they exist in society: racism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, classism, antisemitism, whorephobia, sexism, obliviousness about trauma and survivor identities. Through community, care, and creativity, we aimed to support participants to be able to challenge the injustices that surfaced during the sessions. This was a core part of the experiential learning we wanted participants to be able to back into their wider campaigning lives.

### What understanding power dynamics means

Understanding dynamics allowed us to recognise and diagnose power within a group and form an appropriate response. Our aim as trainers was to

support people to access the learning. **If one of our core beliefs is that learning is an emotional process, then people experiencing oppression may have less ability to engage with the learning.** Understanding and responding to power dynamics can help people experiencing severe marginalisation have more equal access to learning.

Types of power we often saw include:

- ◆ **Social power:** This is what people usually are referring to when talking about identity-based privilege. Made up of things like gender, race, age, disability / illness / neurodivergence, class, religion, education, nationality, immigration status, wealth, language spoken, body type, and so on
- ◆ **Rank:** Your position in a situation based on seniority, title, authority, hierarchy, role, connections etc. You have rank power when delivering training and can use this to support the learning of people who hold less power in your groups
- ◆ **Lateral power:** Is all about context. Someone might be in the same relationship to power as another person (e.g. they have similar social identities and rank) but hold more power in the given context, perhaps because of pre-existing relationships, access to information, skills, experiences, or shared interests. You can have low rank or social power, but still possess lateral power. It is related to the culture of the space you are in. It is emergent and can change quickly e.g. based on how confident you are with the style of activity that is currently being run



Remember that power is not static. It is constantly changing based on the setting, who is present, and what is being done.

## How we tried to implement this in the training:

We always tried to pay attention to the question “who is getting the learning, and at whose cost?” We tried to create experiences that centred the learning of more marginalised people, disrupting the norm that is built to benefit more privileged people. However, lateral power tells us someone is always going to be marginalised in group settings. A way to diagnose lateral power is by considering ‘mainstreams and margins’.

**Mainstreams and margins** are parts of all groups. The mainstream stands for the people that set the tone, communication style and way of working - they set the culture of a space. This is often done subconsciously, but still has a real impact. The mainstream don't necessarily have to be the majority of the group or the more socially privileged. Their ways become the norm, creating the mainstream. Those who don't adhere or share the same disposition tend to find themselves on the margins of the group.

Mainstreams aren't always an issue, but they can cause harm or block the marginalised people's learning. For example, a common mainstream is university campaigners who know all the current political jargon. This group can unintentionally marginalise people with English as a second

language such as immigrants or asylum seekers, and those without the same access to current terminology.

As trainers, we can use our own rank to enable those with less power get the same level of learning as participants with more power, for example by choosing activity styles, influencing what gets more air time, or working directly with participants to find out what would benefit them. Similar to responding to conflict, what is best for the group will depend on if they are going to continue working together. Some examples:

- ◆ **On a residential** – the group won't be working together in the future, so disrupting the mainstream (and the emotional weight it tends to put on the margins) isn't necessarily the best option. The focus instead becomes ‘how can we get the learning to the margin in a way that works for them?’
- ◆ **Everyday Activism** (a group working together long term) – if attention isn't brought to harmful mainstreams, the health of the group (and especially the marginalised members) may become damaged. In this scenario, the mainstreams may need addressing and disrupting

Again, there is not a ‘one size fits all’ response and the goal in addressing conflict is not to force those on the margins to assimilate to the mainstream. The needs of the people involved should be included in whatever response is developed.



## Making accessible spaces

Accessibility is central to power dynamics. In the simplest sense, if people can't access our training (whether that be physically or otherwise) then that's a huge power dynamic we are establishing ourselves.

## Understanding comfort zones

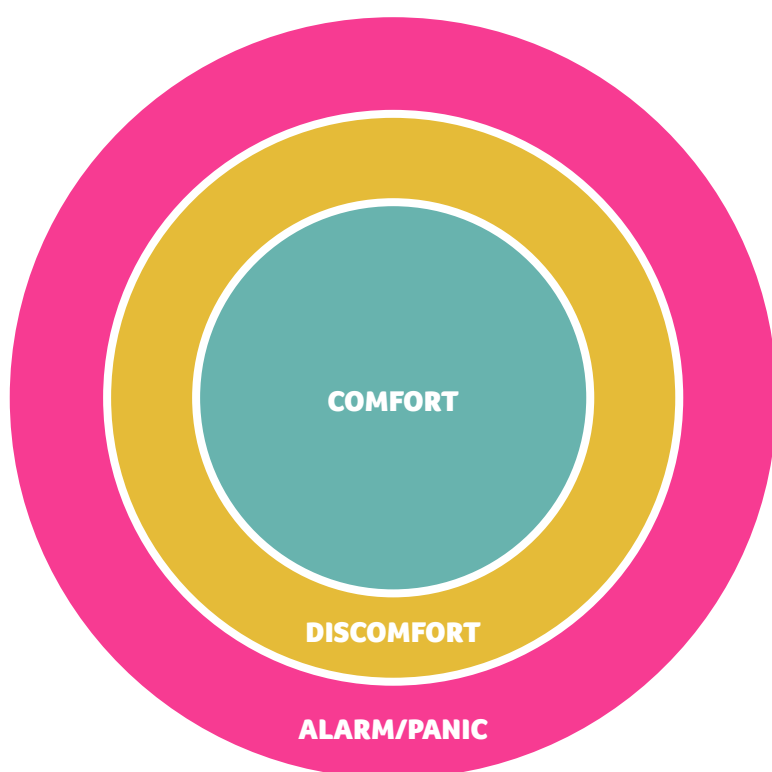
Discomfort is part of the learning process. Comfort is nice and sometimes necessary, but it is only by taking steps into discomfort that we learn. This is related to power, because as trainers we encouraged people to embrace discomfort in order to learn – something we were empowered to ask because of our rank. However, it is the responsibility of the trainer to make an analysis of the situation and ensure we are not pushing anyone too far. When moving into discomfort, it is important to provide supportive frameworks. Knowing that learning can be emotional doesn't mean avoiding activities that bring up strong emotional responses, but it does mean providing

support and structure for it. This might be clearly-defined tasks designed for exploring feelings, or providing other resources such as quiet spaces and places to process.

There is a nuance here. We believe learning is an emotional process and people need emotional security to do their best learning, but also that learning requires stepping into discomfort

- ◆ Discomfort is not the same as being unsafe. We wanted people to take risks, try new things, or be vulnerable. We didn't want them to go so far that they pass discomfort and enter into panic
- ◆ With a large group, this can be hard to judge. Everyone will have different boundaries and needs

At the crux of this is that every participant will be learning multiple different things at any time, managing their own comfort or discomfort, learning how to set boundaries or to take risks.



### COMFORT ZONE:

Familiar, safe, easy – but can be boring.  
No new learning or growth here.  
BUT it's okay to stay in your comfort zone if that is what someone needs at any given time.

### DISCOMFORT ZONE:

Experienced when people try new behaviours.  
May feel interesting, challenging, and scary.  
Where high learning happens.  
Opportunities for safe risk and growth.

### ALARM ZONE:

Too far!!!  
May feel unsafe, triggered, activated.  
Not our goal.

**Your comfort zone will grow as you try new things and take safe risks.**

## Not claiming to be 'safer spaces'

We never claimed that our residentials were a 'safe' or 'safer space', because:

- ◆ There is no way of knowing exactly what will happen when you bring 35 strangers to live and learn together for a week
- ◆ Our participants are all campaigners. As one of our values is leadership by those impacted by an issue, many participants were personally affected by the issues that were discussed in the sessions
  - This isn't inherently unsafe and many would actually find the space liberating and empowering. However it also would bring up personal and shared trauma, anger, fear, and sadness
- ◆ The concept of being triggered is commonly used in spaces like ours, when often what people mean is hurt, upset, or activated in some way. 'Triggered' specifically refers to a trauma response, but is commonly misused
  - There are topics that are commonly upsetting to people, but this isn't the same as being triggered. Literally anything could be a trigger for someone with trauma, so enforcing general 'trigger warnings' isn't always helpful
  - Of course, if someone shares that something is a specific trigger, dismissing the request for warning would be harmful
- ◆ Learning isn't always safe. As mentioned, we believe learning happens when you step out of your comfort zone
  - It was never a goal to push people into unsafety, however every person has a different threshold. In big groups it is impossible to ensure everyone is in the right space for learning, so some people may feel unsafe at times
  - There were provisions for if people did end up in a place of unsafety: the quiet place, counselling, buddy pairs, soothing or creative activities, being in nature, etc.
  - Again as we can't guarantee what will happen or be shared in the space, we can't responsibly guarantee that it would stay safe

This is also tied to abolition. How should we respond if a participant acts in a way that makes others feel unsafe or hurt? [See below for more on this]

## Alternatives to ground rules

We moved away from co-creating ground rules at the start of residentials. We chose not to set rules for people's engagement, such as a safer spaces policy as explained above. We also tried not to 'fix' dynamics of conflict or oppression from the front of the room - we didn't avoid power dynamics, but also tried not to do the work for the participants.

It is worth considering that people who have acted a certain way for years (e.g. taking up a lot of space in conversations) are unlikely to change overnight just because a piece of paper taped on the wall says to share space. This isn't how behaviours change. Instead we would actively try to encourage self-awareness of such dynamics through our facilitation.

We built the cohort so that it had majorities of groups - such as people of colour - to help participants name their oppression as and when it arose. We built the container (the emotional and relational safety of a group) through icebreakers and trust-building exercises as well as explicitly providing multiple support structures. The aim was to enable the participants to trust the space and each other enough to take risks, without writing a list of rules that lack impact.

## CONFLICT

### How we see the world (and the movement)

There is a general aversion to conflict in British culture, the idea that conflict is bad and should be avoided. As a message that many people grew up with, it can feel counterintuitive to reframe our relationship with conflict, but this is essential to taking an abolitionist approach to training and to relationships in general. The idea that people who engage in conflict are aggressive or scary is highly gendered, racialised, and inextricable from



narratives rooted in class dynamics. As such power and privilege were core lenses through which we needed to view conflict. There is also a culture of being quick to blame or shame people. And at the extreme, people are ostracised without space for accountability, reparation, and ultimately transformative justice. Combined, this meant we couldn't take an abolitionist approach without naming our relationship with conflict.

### **What our beliefs about conflict are**

We believe that while conflict *can* be bad, it is not inherently bad. It can actually be healthy. Conflict and harm are different things. They can overlap and some conflicts are harmful, but we disagree with the automatic assumption that 'conflict equals harm'. We've seen on countless occasions how generative conflict can be.

Being conflict-avoidant often results in a tendency to avoid accountability when we cause harm. At the same time, conflict can trigger a trauma response. A trauma response is not an excuse to avoid accountability, but highlights the nuanced way that multiple truths and needs can exist at once. Conflict is often simply just people trying to get their needs heard. However when we are activated, the chances that those needs will really be heard is low. This in turn stokes the conflict.

We wanted to provide structures that would support everyone to work through conflict. We weren't aiming for conflict management or even necessarily resolution, but to embrace it: our goal was conflict transformation. This is what best aligned with our abolitionist view of justice.

### **How we tried to implement this in the training:**

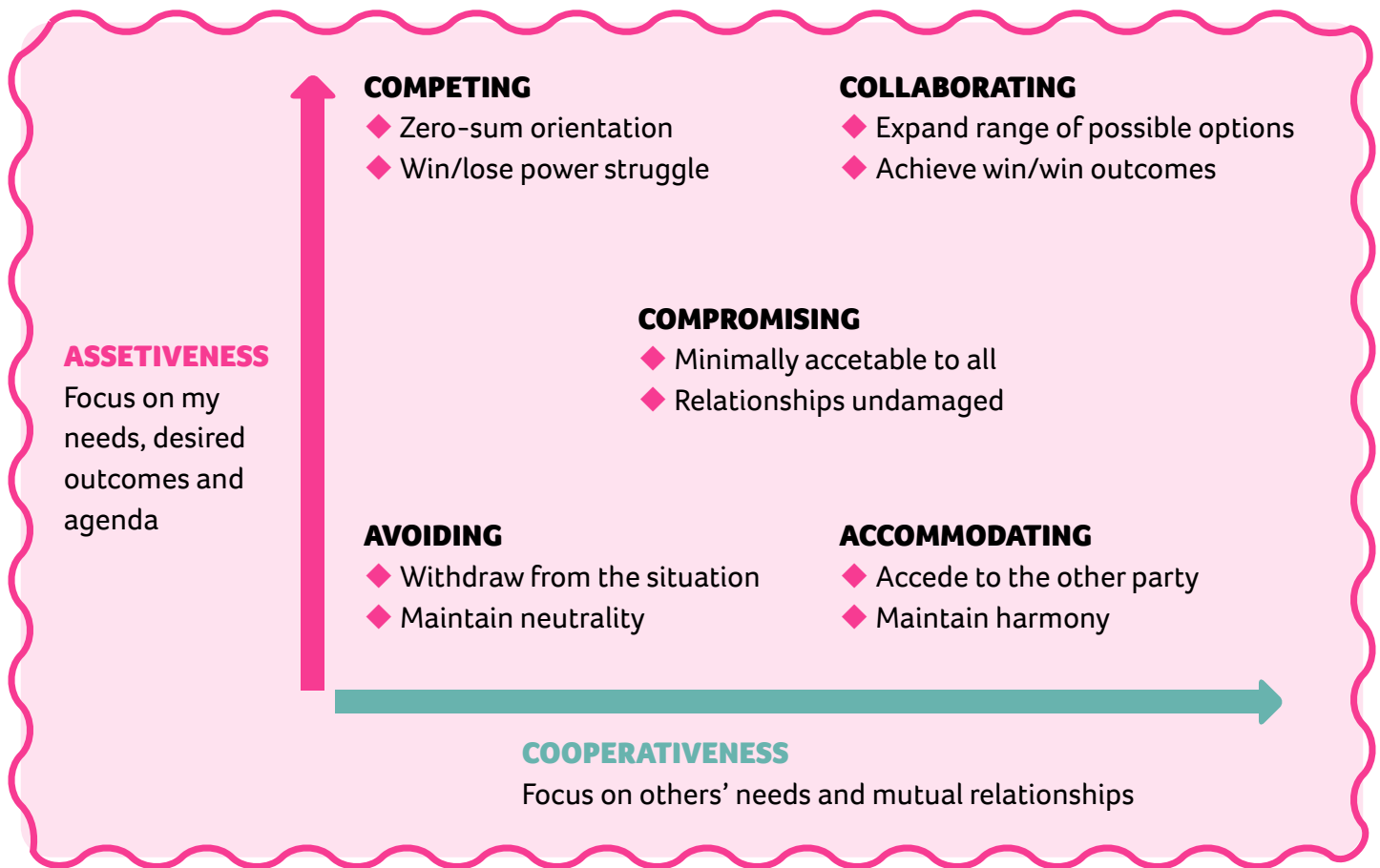
People learn in part through being in relationship with one another, not by being told what is right or wrong to think, say or do. As trainers it wasn't our role to 'solve' conflicts with our power or decide who was at fault. Instead we'd support people to raise their voices and lean into holding conflict. The training team would monitor and tend to macro- and micro-dynamics of marginalisation. They would support individuals and groups through one-to-one conversations, group discussions, group activities, time out, and other means by which they either wanted to come forward or take a distance.

However, there were times when we were expecting trainers and facilitators to be able to do this without the necessary skills and support they needed themselves. As a result we hired Rif Sharif, a mediator and conflict specialist, to advise and support us with the conflicts that would inevitably arise when you bring 35 passionate strangers together for a week.





## Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes



### Conflict top tips

- ◆ It happens... it's normal and can be healthy. It's also very common that trainers fear having to respond to conflict. Through practice we can learn to embrace it. Roleplays are a great way to try out responding to situations in a lower stakes environment
- ◆ Breaks are an incredible tool
  - Similarly, changing space or going for a walk can help reset things
  - However, when there is a conflict and you 'take it out of the room', the rest of the room still feels it. Consider how you can tend to the emotional needs of all everyone
  - Remember, the people who cause harm still have needs
- ◆ Ask yourself "what does the group need?"
  - In some situations (e.g. a one-off session for people who don't work together) there may be less need to resolve it or move people out of conflict
- ◆ Multiple conflicting things can be true at once
  - Life is complex and nuanced. We can hold multitudes. It is not as simple as one person being 'right' and the other 'wrong'
- ◆ Don't misread what is just a norm for different people. Black people, non-Black people of colour, trans people, women, and disabled people are often read as hostile when they're not
  - A British norm is to be avoidant. Other cultures are more direct. Likewise some neurodivergent people will communicate more directly
  - Being direct isn't inherently rude or hostile

## TRAUMA

### How we see the world (and the movement)

It's a popular belief that we're all rational, objective actors in society, but we're not. The mainstream understanding of what is or isn't 'rational' to begin with is generally set by people with high levels of privilege, and is easily weaponised or used to police people who are in fact having a very understandable response to their situation.

We also learn in British culture that there are specific, appropriate ways to respond to a situation, which is just not true. A person's response may not be what is deemed as 'usual' from a specific perspective, but that doesn't make it invalid or wrong. There is a deep need for compassion and understanding, and for us to examine how we see emotions. The idea of 'normal' is ultimately rooted in every system of oppression.

### What our beliefs about trauma are

Most of the people we worked with carried trauma of some kind, almost invariably because we were working with campaigners who had lived experience of the very issues they were campaigning on.

Trauma is held in the body, especially if it is unprocessed. There's a western tendency to separate the body and the mind when in reality they are connected and communicating at all times. This can manifest in any number of ways. Regardless of how it shows up, our belief is that embodied and somatic work is an important part of supporting participants.

Education itself can be a trigger for trauma. The education system that most of us experienced in the UK is rigid and designed in a way that only suited a certain type of person. Many people believed themselves to be unintelligent or lazy because the approach didn't work for them. Others experienced other forms of trauma in schools, from unfair power dynamics to harmful social interactions. These experiences are often worse for

Black people, non-Black people of colour, disabled and / or neurodivergent people, and LGBTQIA+ people. In inviting people from all backgrounds into a learning space, it was essential to reassure folks that our approach wasn't going to be like school, and then to actually follow through on that.

### How we tried to implement this in the training

On a practical level, we tried to share as much information about the training and logistics with people in advance so they were well informed and could manage any fears as best possible

- ◆ We avoided using institutional spaces for our training such as school or university buildings or formal conference centres

Content was designed to engage with different learning styles and use different learning channels. Variety ensures everyone feels empowered in their learning at least some of the time

- ◆ We used a lot of gamification, humour, play, and joy. We wanted to reframe learning as something that could be fun and nourishing

Having many facilitators meant that we could notice if a participant seemed like they needed support and then subsequently offer them care

- ◆ We supported trainers to deal with their own trauma as well. Coaching, counselling, debriefing, and space to rest helped with this

Trainers had skills and knowledge around trauma and activated emotions. When this was spotted in training there were systems for how we would make decisions about what to do

- ◆ **We approached trauma and activation with compassion and empathy, whether it was in participants, the staff team, or ourselves**

## ACCESSIBILITY

Delivering our work without building in accessibility would be hypocritical. To create the world we envisioned, we need to be proactively welcoming and supporting all identities to participate as fully as they are willing and able to. Creating spaces that are both dynamic and accessible was core to the Campaign Bootcamp approach, although we acknowledge this is something that we didn't always get right, especially in the early days.

Having said that, making accessible training needn't be the huge and complex task that it is sometimes painted as. Through actually listening to and being led by disabled people, and considering access from the very beginning of a project, creating accessible spaces is made much easier.

### Our approach

Our approach to accessibility is guided by Disability Justice. This is a framework and movement first conceptualised by Patty Berne and Mia Mingus, both disabled queer women of colour, and further developed with other members of Sins Invalid. It was made by and centres people of marginalised identities at more than one intersection in response to the shortcomings of the Disability Rights movement, which Patty Berne said “invisibilized the lives of peoples who lived at intersecting junctures of oppression”.

There are 10 key principles of Disability Justice, all of which greatly informed our work. It's hard to pick any that were more important to us than others - they are all essential and often overlapping. Reading the list back now feels so reminiscent of what we came together to try and build. Below is a quick overview of the 10 principles of Disability Justice. You can read about them in more depth here.

## 10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

1

### INTERSECTIONALITY

*“We do not live single issue lives”* – Audre Lorde  
Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world “invalid”.

2

### LEADERSHIP OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED

*“We are led by those who most know these systems”* – Aurora Levins Morales

3

### ANTI-CAPITALIST POLITIC

In an economy that sees land and humans as components of profit, we are anti-capitalist by the nature of having non-conforming body/minds.

4

### COMMITMENT TO CROSS-MOVEMENT ORGANISING

Shifting how social justice movements understand disability and contextualise ableism, disability-justice lends itself to politics of alliance.

5

### RECOGNISING WHOLENESS

People have inherent worth outside of commodity relations and capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience.

6

### SUSTAINABILITY

We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long term. Our embodied experiences guide us toward ongoing justice and liberation.

7

### COMMITMENT TO CROSS-DISABILITY SOLIDARITY

We honor the insights and participation of all our community members, knowing that isolation undermines collective liberation.

8

### INTERDEPENDENCE

We meet each others' needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over our lives.

9

### COLLECTIVE ACCESS

As brown, black and queer-bodied disabled people we bring flexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normality, to be in community with each other.

10

### COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

No body or mind can be left behind – only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.

Source: [www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice](http://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice)

When people think about 'access' they generally default to physical disability. This is of course a main part of it, but true access goes beyond that. It means supporting the needs of everyone wanting to take part. This includes, but is not limited to, how you support the following groups to engage:

- ◆ Disabled people: including those who experience physical impairments, mental health conditions and trauma, long-term health conditions, neurodivergence, intellectual or developmental disabilities, D/deaf people, Blind people, and all others who experience ableism
- ◆ People on low or no income: supporting them to access both in-person and online training which often incurs travel, food, care, equipment costs, and other expenses
- ◆ Carers: people who have extra responsibilities that impact their energy, availability, and finances
- ◆ People who experience identity-based oppression: those who experience marginalisation in their daily lives (for example due to racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia etc) may feel less comfortable attending through a valid fear that the event organisers or participants might act in harmful ways
- ◆ People with English as a second language or with lower reading comprehension
- ◆ People without prior knowledge: people newer to ideas often feel unwelcome, isolated, or judged by those who are familiar with a topic. This happens often in organising spaces where longer-term members expect new people to already know and feel the same things as they do. This is an example of people having different learning comfort zones, and can lead to conflict

If we believe that learning is an emotional process and that the best learning happens when people are experiencing emotional and relational safety with others in their group, then creating inclusive situations for the above groups is an accessibility issue. This means addressing the barriers that all people face, whether that's ensuring physical access to a venue, pacing a training so that people can manage their personal care or the care of

someone else, or enabling people to overcome financial blocks to learning.

*"A disability justice framework understands that: All bodies are unique and essential; All bodies have strengths and needs that must be met; We are powerful, not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them; All bodies are confined by ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state, religion, and more, and we cannot separate them."*

**Patty Berne**

### **Our approach:**

1. Recognises that everyone has needs irrespective of their identity
2. Aims to centre and be led by people who experience oppression

Every section of this report is intended to speak to how we consider accessibility throughout every aspect of our work, from our chosen training styles to our abolitionist underpinning.

### **How we wanted to implement this in the training:**

We want to acknowledge here that we didn't always offer all of these things. Whilst we had a more proactive and supportive approach to accessibility in the later years of Campaign Bootcamp, much of this list below was learned and developed along the way.

Accessibility cannot be an afterthought. It should be included in the earliest stages of planning and carried throughout. Access doesn't have to be a big, complex thing - it's generally an ableist myth that it is always hard work. Some things can be tricky to navigate but embedding access from the inception of a project makes it much simpler. Whilst it's not inherently complicated, we do recognise that money can be a limiting factor.



Because the wider world we inhabit is designed without meaningful accessibility in mind, it's often the case that products, services, or venues that would increase accessibility are expensive. This was something that would limit us at times.

- ◆ Work with disabled people, meaningfully implement what they say, and pay them for their work
- ◆ Don't make assumptions about if someone has needs and what they are. Many conditions are invisible or variable, and all people have needs irrespective of their identity
- ◆ Ask everyone what they need, whether they identify as disabled or not...
- ◆ BUT be careful what you're asking. Asking someone to list their conditions can be unhelpful:
  - Disabled people are often expected to share extensive personal information with strangers in order to get the support they need. We don't want to play into that narrative
  - Never ask anyone to prove their access needs. This perpetuates harmful belief systems around who deserves access and support

- This doesn't actually tell you what would help them. People with the same conditions will have different needs and find different things helpful
- Not everyone can get a diagnosis. Whether because of financial status or identity, some people will much more readily receive formal medical diagnoses. Less privileged people mustn't be excluded because of this
- People without recognised conditions still have needs and things that would help them better engage with the training. Physical comfort and emotional security aids learning for all!
- ◆ Make your standard accessibility information public from the start. If you're holding an event, describe what accessibility features are in place (e.g. lifts, wide doors, interpretation, quiet spaces, large print, captions, finance to assist with internet access)
  - Also name the inaccessible features publicly. For example, if your venue is up some stairs without a lift, declare that on your promotional information. People don't want to turn up and then realise the venue is inaccessible, and it's also unfair for folks to always have to enquire to find these things out in advance



- ◆ Give examples of other things you can offer. The bar is set so low for accessibility and disabled folks are often expected to tolerate inaccessible situations. As such, a lot of people don't even realise they can ask for things
  - Offer opportunities to chat with people about what sort of things could help them if they're uncertain
- ◆ Know that people's needs change! Many conditions are variable. There are different factors that can also exacerbate some conditions - weather, temperature, eating, fatigue, overwhelm, stress etc.
  - This means new needs might emerge that you and / or the participant were not expecting. Responding to emergent needs can feel daunting if it now means that your plan is inaccessible, but you will often reach the best response by figuring it out with the person affected
- ◆ Understand that disability has been weaponized such that disabled folks might fear disclosing that they are disabled or feel scared to ask for things. Try to build an environment that normalises and encourages people asking for their needs to be met
- ◆ Understand that there is no solution that meets all needs: 'fully accessible' does not exist
  - There are so many different needs that you can't create a situation that is going to be accessible to everyone, and some needs are going to be in conflict with one another
  - This doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to find the best possible solution. Disabled-led initiatives demonstrate that there are so many ways to maximise inclusion in groups of people with multiple different needs
  - The goal is not that everyone can find access in every activity but that they feel held and like they belong in the overall journey

See appendix 1a for how we practically made our training more accessible, and 1b for how we made this information available publicly.





# Notes from our trainers

## Things I want to remember...

*You're learning and you won't always get it right. Sometimes you might hurt people. Conflict can feel hard to navigate but with nuance, compassion, and the ability to hold multiple truths, people can heal and move forward together.*

**Be yourself! Share yourself!** Use wisdom gained from every part of your life to support people on their learning journey. Draw from your faith traditions, spiritual practice, creative pursuits, hobbies, past jobs, sources of nourishment, healing pathways, ancestral wisdom - every part of your colourful life can be transformed into a valuable tool for other people's learning and inspiration.

We are always better together. There are no universal truths, experiences or outlooks.

*You learn much more from embracing the process than you do from holding tightly onto the idea of a specific, perfect outcome.*

Remember working with / acknowledging / seeing conflict and difference, being curious about conflict rather than afraid or trying to resolve it, and bringing out conflicts and differences using mainstreams and margins. Notice the ways different people approach it.

*We learn in relationship, dialogue, and constant self- and collective regard.*

*Working with others makes us better. We get to confront ourselves and each other and grow together. This is how our movements win.*

Remember to regulate your nervous system. Soothe yourself. Other people's responses are not necessarily anything to do with you.

# Start with care – the rest will follow

Grace reflects on the role of internalised and systematic ableism and how to create a culture of care in facilitation.

If I were to distil UNPACKED's many hours of learning, laughter, and connection into just one word, I'd pick care. Care is simple and complex, vast and easy to miss. To me, a lot of what we learned was about the different ways we show care and accountability- to ourselves as trainers, to our teams, and to the people we are training.

A central principle of UNPACKED that encompasses this is the "4 knows"- four areas that educators should consider. Know:

- ◆ **Yourself:** your style, hooks, needs, identity as a trainer.
- ◆ **Your team:** how you work with co-trainers supportively.
- ◆ **Your group:** understanding the needs, goals or learning style of who you are training.
- ◆ **Your content:** the learning aims and how you can be adaptable.

The categories may not seem like tools for care at first, but my understanding of them has become inseparable from it. Knowing these areas takes time, effort and commitment- it requires care.

Where I put my care has shifted since I first started facilitating as a teen, but most noticeably throughout UNPACKED. Historically I was pragmatic to a fault (and often to my own detriment), turning up over-prepared and trying to hold everything myself. Getting the content across was my primary focus. I thought the best thing was

to give people the hard skills, and the rest could wait. This is definitely a colonial view I learnt in school, valuing practical intellectual knowledge first.

Over the years I've made a conscious effort to build in more creativity and flexibility. UNPACKED grew my confidence and skills in this area- we've played games, competed in challenges, and even had a talent show- all as ways of learning! It also helped me embrace all types of wisdom and shifted me into being accountable to the groups I'm training as opposed to the session plans. I've found a balance between knowing my content and knowing my group. It sometimes means taking a longer route, but the process is richer and the learning is more profound and long-lasting.

However "knowing myself", turning that attention I show my groups and content inwards, has been harder. As a disabled person, I have a complex relationship with care. When I was younger care was an unwanted necessity, and more recently I've begged for it in our decimated healthcare system. My strained relationship with self-knowledge and self-care has many roots, but the biggest culprit is ableism, both external and self-directed. I have struggled with accepting my conditions and haven't been invested enough in myself to actually want to know myself.

In this sense, the first week of UNPACKED had perfect timing. I was mid-flare and using a mobility



aid, so embarked on the course with my often-hidden conditions made easily visible... But that didn't stop my self-avoidance from pretending I didn't need anything! I kept this up for a few days, banishing it from mind when doing reflections or pushing myself when really I knew I shouldn't. Unsurprisingly it didn't last.

Midweek we played a game designed to highlight our cohort dynamics. During this it was impossible for myself or the rest of the group to avoid what it meant for me as the only visibly disabled person in the space, and in the process exposed years of my repressed experiences.

It was in the subsequent conversations, reflections, activities, and tears (on my part), that I first named out loud the ableism I directed at myself, and the double standard that I would never treat my disabled peers the same way.

Something had to give. My approach was unsustainable both personally and as an educator.

So I went back to basics.

I poured time into knowing myself. This meant trying to accept me fully, disregarding years of ableist conditioning. A seed was planted in that first week together which continued to grow throughout the year, and the culture of our group shifted. I've learnt to cut myself slack, rest, ask upfront for needs to be met, and be less apologetic

for my disabled self. Taking a step back and working on "knowing myself" opened up more opportunities for growth and learning. I feel like I am doing my best work as a result. It's a truly transformational process.

This year, I've learnt that if you don't lay safe foundations of care and connection, then the real work won't happen. You need to create a culture of care for the groups you train, which hinges on creating a practice of care for yourself.

Over summer I was lucky to work long-term with a new campaign group. The pandemic had magnified their oppression, and many were struggling under lockdown. Starting a campaign at this time is hard, and I was very aware of how it could impact our work together. It was also my first online group, and I was conscious of creating the same engaging experience as I would in-person.

But if UNPACKED had taught me one thing, it was that if I didn't centre care and my values of disability justice, we weren't going far. So I made sure our very first conversation was one of needs, access, and community. We worked together to build a group culture that reflected this, and our process evolved over time. And it worked! The training was really successful and the group is out there working on the campaign right now. In short, I trusted in my own key learning from UNPACKED: start with care, the rest will follow.

# Final reflections

- ◆ Learning happens always, everywhere
- ◆ Education is a practice
- ◆ It's about life
- ◆ Transformation can happen
- ◆ Remember you can transform for better and for worse
- ◆ We aren't saviours
- ◆ Always be in critical regard to power: with, within, over, to
- ◆ Understand the difference between taking power and empowerment
- ◆ Don't do on their behalf, support them to do for themselves
- ◆ Always seek feedback
- ◆ Good education isn't an iteration of established education
- ◆ Education is about relationships not structure
- ◆ This work is emotional
- ◆ Don't let perfect be the enemy of good
- ◆ We are always learning even as we are teaching
- ◆ We are always a fractal
- ◆ Action learning cycles happen on every level
- ◆ If there's no joy, it's not working

## Thanks

With thanks to all the movement educators who inspired us, trained us, worked with us, learnt from us, and continue without us. And thanks to all those who supported us in this work. There are too many of you to name.

# Appendices

## Appendix – Resources

### APPENDIX 1A – PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF HOW WE BUILT ACCESSIBILITY INTO CB TRAININGS

#### Across all delivery methods:

- ◆ Asked all people what would help them take part, give examples, and talk it through with them.
  - ◆ Offer assistance in writing and submitting applications to courses.
  - ◆ Adapt activities in advance based on the information you have about participants.
  - ◆ Write sessions that have variety in the activities, group sizes, and learning styles used, so that all learning preferences are met at some point.
  - ◆ Provide information about the session, breaks, and logistics in advance.
    - This can clash with emergently responding to what is happening in the group. It is easy to stray from timings and you can't predict what the group will bring. Consider the impact that working emergently will have on your specific group and check in with them if plans change.
  - ◆ Allow lots of time to build emotional safety and relationships in new groups.
  - ◆ Put in lots of breaks, and make sure they are long enough for people who have reduced mobility or require assistance to do whatever they need during the break.
  - ◆ Offer multiple ways to participate and communicate.
  - ◆ For sessions that people pay to attend, offer bursary and sliding-scale places.
- bathrooms, locations with good transport links, hearing aid loops, a variety of different seating, etc
- ◆ Consider the sensory experience. Large groups or loud noises can be overwhelming and draining. Try to offer a quiet space that people can go to.
  - ◆ Provide accessible bathrooms and gender neutral bathrooms.
    - Adapt your breaks based on this – if you have 10 people who need to use an accessible toilet, but the venue only has 1 accessible toilet, then a 15 minute break isn't long enough.
    - If the venue is only being used by your group, you can stick new signs over gendered bathrooms to create your own gender-neutral ones. Just describe what facilities are in each.
  - ◆ If residential, try to offer the option of not sharing bedrooms.
  - ◆ Cover costs of travel, food, and offer bursary places. Try to make sure people don't pay out of pocket and then expense things, as this is inaccessible to low income people and asylum seekers.
  - ◆ Offer a creche or support with childcare costs.

#### Online training:

- ◆ Provide data top ups as not everyone has internet access or can afford bills.
- ◆ Try to set up an equipment loan scheme for people who don't have a computer, smartphone, or other tech they would need to access the training. If this isn't possible, look into local

#### In person training:

- ◆ Use accessible venues. This could include space with: ground floor/step free access to amenities, wide doors, electric doors, lifts, accessible

initiatives or provide information on where they could access a public computer such as at a library.

- ◆ Provide training on how to use new equipment or software before the training starts
- ◆ Pay extra attention to energy levels and respond with breaks or energising/grounding activities- some people get more fatigued online.
- ◆ Spend more time on building relationships and making people feel comfortable. It can take longer to feel safe and welcome when you're not in person.
- ◆ Get creative with your activities. Try to make it so that people aren't spending all the time in front of their screen. Use off screen activities, journaling, paired phone calls, etc.
- ◆ Be aware that not everyone has a safe space to join from. They might not be able to share or talk openly about certain things.



## APPENDIX 1B – PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTIALS

Our Bootcamp Residentials are attended by a diverse mix of campaigners, including many people who are disabled or have accessibility requirements.

Filling in an application, staying somewhere new, or attending a week-long training might feel inaccessible- especially given that accessibility is often an afterthought in wider society. This was definitely a concern I had when going on Bootcamp as a disabled campaigner back in 2017, but I was relieved to find that accessibility was thought of from the start.

Now I help facilitate the Bootcamp Residentials and I'm keen to ensure that future participants have the same supportive experience that I did. Here I'll explain a bit more about accessibility for the training, from writing your application all the way through to the residential week.

### How we approach accessibility at Bootcamp:

- ◆ **We're person-centred.** We know that everyone's needs are different and can change over time. We will talk with you about your specific access requirements, and you can reach out to us if something changes.
- ◆ **We're non-judgemental.** You don't need to feel bad for asserting your access needs or asking for something.
- ◆ **We trust you.** You know yourself best. We know that many conditions are invisible, that symptoms vary over time, and that not everyone can easily get a diagnosis. We also know that there are other reasons why someone might have an access need outside of having an illness, condition or disability, such as age or injury. We trust you all.
- ◆ **We can help you figure it out.** You might not know what access support would benefit you, and that's okay. We can talk together about what might help.

- ◆ **We're flexible.** Sometimes people don't realise they have an access need until they get to camp. Whilst it's easier to meet requirements when we have more notice, we respond as best as we can to things as they emerge too.

### What accessibility looks like at Bootcamp

On previous residentials we've supported access needs that are physical, emotional, cognitive, sensory, educational (and more). The huge range of potential accessibility requirements makes it hard for us to write a complete list of everything we can offer, but here are some examples of things we've done in the past:

#### ◆ Before bootcamp

At the application stage we have:

- Provided application questions in different formats.
- Ensured the online form is screen reader compatible.
- Supported applicants in a one-to-one setting e.g. a phone call to help them organise their thoughts, answer application questions or type out answers. We are not concerned about spelling, punctuation or how good your written English is.

At the interview stage we have:

- Arranged interview times that works for the applicant
- Held interviews over the phone or Skype
- Arranged longer interview slots for people who might need more time to think and share answers
- Let applicants know if they have been successful as soon as possible

*We ask about accessibility at both the application and interview stages. You are not obliged to share any information at this point- we will always check in again if you get offered a place. Disclosing accessibility requirements will not affect your application.*

## ◆ Preparing for bootcamp

We have:

- Discussed access requirements over the phone, email or skype to ensure they are met
- Helped plan the most accessible journey to and from Bootcamp

## ◆ During camp

We have:

- The venue, Gilwell Park, is wheelchair accessible. This includes step-free access to the training rooms, lifts, wide doors and adapted toilets. *We recognise these things may benefit many people, not just wheelchair users.*
- Provided the detailed agenda in advance
- Offered telephone counselling
- Used quieter alternatives for getting the group's attention during sessions e.g. using hand signals rather than shouting
- Provided suitable rooms e.g. wheelchair accessible rooms, ground floor rooms, shower seats, single rooms, a choice of bath or shower, fridges in rooms for medical needs.
- Arranged for induction loops, captions, printouts of presentations and large print handouts.
- Offered alternatives to the regular chairs, including specific seats, cushions, yoga mats, bean bags, back supports, feet supports
- Supported carers, PAs and assistance animals to attend
- Provided a quiet space, self-care space and sober spaces

*This list is not exhaustive. If you don't see what you need listed here then let us know! It is also not a guarantee that we can always offer everything listed, but we will always strive to offer these things (and more) or talk about what we can do alternatively to make Bootcamp more accessible.*

## How you can talk to us about your access reqs

To talk to us about your access requirements, you can email us [community@campaignbootcamp.org](mailto:community@campaignbootcamp.org) at any stage.

You can also call us Monday - Friday from 9am - 5pm on 020 3868 6376.

On top of this:

- ◆ We will be holding online sessions to help with all your application questions, date TBC.
- ◆ You will have a chance to discuss access with us at interview stage (optional).
- ◆ We will reach out to all successful applicants approximately 4 weeks before the residential to ask about accessibility requirements.
- ◆ We will work with you 1 on 1 to make sure they are met

# Appendix – Glossary

## OUR PROGRAMMES

◆ **Residentials (often referred to as ‘Bootcamps’ or ‘camps’):** A six-day residential training where 35 activists from different campaigns and backgrounds would come together to learn. These aimed to equip participants with the skills, confidence, and community to run effective campaigns, whilst also centering joy and creativity. Participants and staff would stay together on site, sharing meals and spending free time together. Beyond the concrete skills taught, residentials were a space for connection and personal transformation too. They were aimed at folks with some prior campaigning experience.

◆ **Everyday Activism (EA):** However much we tried to make the residentials as accessible as possible (physically, financially, emotionally etc), there are always going to be people who cannot put their lives on hold for six days to attend a training in another city. And so our community programme was born! EA was a much more flexible series of training, delivered over a number of weeks, to a group of campaigners working together on the same campaign. They were held in the group’s own community and much more adaptable to the needs of the participants. They were also more suitable for people with little or no prior campaigning experience.

◆ **UNPACKED Training for Social Change Trainers:** UNPACKED was a deep dive into your training practice, leaning into deep self-reflection and development in a structured and supported way. It was born out of a recognition that there wasn’t enough trainer development available within the movement

– **Advanced:** a year-long course for a small cohort made up of residentials, day-long, and

evening sessions. We launched UNPACKED in 2020 as a pilot. It was designed not only to develop attendees as individual trainers but to also develop their practice in supporting, working with, and developing other trainers around them. This simply can’t be done in a short training programme, as it’s fundamentally about action, reflection, generalisation and application in the context of ongoing practice. This was aimed at people in active training practice.

– **Beginners:** a shorter induction (three days / six afternoons) to our methodology and approach aimed at anyone who trains / facilitates in social change settings, or campaigners who are interested in becoming trainers to contribute to the movement

◆ **Distance learning:** training delivered online as a result of the pandemic

– **Long groups:** these were groups that did the distance learning equivalent of EA. We piloted this with WeDeserve, a Bristol mental health / disability justice group in the summer of 2020. We then developed it into a more robust offer with two Age Activism groups (targeted at getting older people into campaigning) and Rooted in Resistance (a group for environmentalists of colour)

– **Standalone sessions / one-offs:** we developed a range of one-off sessions, ranging from campaign storytelling and petition writing, to compassionate abolition and coping with COVID-19

◆ **Communities of resistance:** our annual conference for people who attended our training, focusing on the 4 Cs of care, community, challenge, creativity

# Appendix – Timeline

- ◆ **2013** – first bootcamps run for digital campaigners
- ◆ **2015** – Anna Collins Nham and Nim Ralph bring in new pedagogy and methodology. Regularly running three residentials per year
- ◆ **2017** – Everyday Activism developed
- ◆ **2018** – Rif Sharif brought in as conflict specialist
- ◆ **Dec 2019** – pilot for the advanced year-long UNPACKED
- ◆ **March 2020** – switch to online training. Most staff furloughed. Nim takes UNPACKED online. Grace Jeremy develops first plots of distance campaign skills learning, both in the Everyday Activism style and in standalone sessions
- ◆ **Aug 2020** – our first fully online Everyday Activism group graduates
- ◆ **Nov 2020** – our pilot cohort for UNPACKED graduates
- ◆ **2021** – first Age Activism takes place online, multiple standalone sessions delivered
- ◆ **2021** – Rooted in Resistance
- ◆ **2021** – international communities of practice
- ◆ **Nov 2021** – beginners UNPACKED pilot #1
- ◆ **Jan 2022** – second Age Activism, beginners UNPACKED pilot #2
- ◆ **Feb 2022** – closing conference