

Sample Agenda for a Preparation for Nonviolent Direct Action Workshop

This is an agenda for a three session nonviolence prep with Sessions 1 and 2 held one day and Session 3 (Legal/Jail) held several days or weeks later. The last page shows several ways to adapt this agenda to other circumstances and purposes. The presentations listed below refer to the paper "Notes on Nonviolent Action."

Time Item Topic

10 Presentation — Introduction to the Day

- Who we (the preparers) are
- Getting arrested is not social change — this prep is about nonviolent social change (which might, of course, involve activity in which you risk arrest)
- Not committed to go to action, join an AG, or be arrested
- Affinity groups and our organization briefly — arrest riskers, support people, etc.
- Preps are for you not for us, so interrupt us
- Literature (especially handbooks)

10 Presentation/Decision — Agenda Review

- Why we have visible agendas
- Why we review them
- Review the agenda — why Legal/Jail Prep is separate
- Make changes, get consensus of group (including preparers)
- Pick a timekeeper
- Circulate a list to get names, addresses, phone numbers

20 Group Introductions

- 2 Explain
- 6 (3x2) Each person introduces self to partner
- 12 Introduce partner to group

• Possible Topics:

- Who you are, what you do
- Why you are here, what made you decide to come
- What is important to you about nonviolent action
- A time you stood up to an injustice
- When you are likely to use what you learn today
- A good thing that happened to you recently

Nonviolent Action (NVA) and Social Change

15 Small Group Discussion — Your Thoughts about Nonviolent Action

- Break into groups of 3 or 4
- Give each person a chance to talk
- Discuss your ideas about NV action

• Topics

- What is nonviolent action?
- Is nonviolent action effective?
- What makes it effective?
- How does nonviolent action change society?

5 Brainstorm — Examples of Nonviolent Action

- 2 Explain
- 3 Do: participants suggest ideas that are written on a wall chart
- Topic:** What are some examples of nonviolent action you have seen, heard about, or participated in

10 Presentation — Nonviolent Action: History and Successes

- History of nonviolent action and stories about times it was effective

10 Brainstorm — What, Why, and How of NVA

- 1 Explain
- 9 (3 x 3) Brainstorm on each topic
- **Topics**
 - What is Nonviolent Action (NVA)? and/or Questions about NVA
 - Why Nonviolent Action? (versus violent action)
 - Nonviolent Responses to Violence

15 Presentation — Nonviolent Action: What, Why, and How

- Active versus passive, malice versus love
- Many ways and means of NVA based on many philosophies
- Effective nonviolent action is **bold, active, loving, and strategic**
- Definition of Nonviolence (NV), Civil Disobedience (CD), Direct Action (DA), and Nonviolent Action (NVA)
- Reasons for *nonviolent* action: pragmatic, practical, personal, moral
- Emotional violence and the tone of actions

10 Questions**10 •• Stretch break**

- Backrubs, game of knots, jelly roll, sitting in laps, mwaaa, song
- Collect list of participants (if applicable)

10 Presentation and Questions — Nonviolence Agreement — Wall Chart**15 Small Group Discussion — Your Personal Experiences with Nonviolence**

— Break into groups of 3 or 4 — give each person a chance to talk

- Discuss NV action from your personal experience — how did it feel?

• Topics

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Times when you acted violently | • Times when you were able to stop violence |
| • Times when you acted boldly, but nonviolently | • Difficulty you have in being nonviolent |

35 Role Play — Hassle Lines

5 Explain

Three times:

3 Set up & roleplay

7 Discuss

• Possible Topics

- A counter-demonstrator confronts you
- Facility worker at site or in restaurant — jobs, etc. hassles you
- News media — why did you come to be arrested?
- Man trying to pick up women in bus station
- Fellow demonstrator attempting to burn police car

• Discussion

- What worked and didn't work?
- How did it feel for you?
- What did you learn?
- Set up and do hassle lines on your own in your affinity group

Organizing for Nonviolent Social Change**15 Presentation — Organizing Campaigns for Nonviolent Social Change (Briefly)**

- Getting arrested is not social change — but social change may include risking arrest
- Types of social change: personal persuasion, media, organization building, lawsuits, nonviolent struggle
- Ways to win a campaign: conversion, acquiescence (wear down), accommodation (see loss of support and accede), incapacitation (lose support and unable to exert control), nonviolent emotional coercion (threaten something they value like elected office), nonviolent physical coercion (physically restrain them from acting) — see paper titled “Dynamics of a Direct Action Campaign”
- Strategizing for change (very briefly), choosing far-reaching, yet realistic goals
- Preparing for a change campaign (see paper with this title)
- Steps in a nonviolent campaign (see paper with this title)
- Building a movement (federations, coalitions, steps in a movement, different kinds of activists — Professional Change Organizations, cutting edge iconoclasts, grassroots educators, grassroots activists, organization builders) — see Moyer's “Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements”

10 Questions**10 Evaluation of first session — Goods, bads, improvements**

3 hours 30 min.

50

Lunch

Second Session

10 Gather

- Game (knots, jelly roll, sitting in laps, mwaaa), song
- Maybe re-introductions, agenda review (especially if on another day)

Affinity Groups and Support

10 Presentation — Affinity Groups and Support

- What they are — groups of 5-20 people who work and support each other in actions and outside of actions
- History — name from anarchist collectives in Spain, but pre-dated by tribes, etc.
- Various functions — social change actions, long-term social change, parties
- Roles in action and importance of support
- Roles — support, medics, media spoke, NV monitor, vibes watcher, legal observer

5 Questions

Co-operative Decision-Making and the Consensus Process

15 Presentation — Co-operative Decision-Making and the Consensus Process

- Consensus basics — cooperative process, thorough discussion, consent, process breakdown
- What consensus is not — not unanimity, voting, compromise, bargaining
- Why consensus — cooperative, true democracy, emotionally safe, inspiring
- Roles and techniques for a meeting — facilitator, notetaker, timekeeper, agendas, evaluation, small groups
- Spokescouncils
- History — Quaker background, emotional blocks, participatory democracy, feminist critique

10 Questions**30 Role Play — Co-operative Decision Making**

— Divide into several small AGs

5 Set up

15 Roleplay (10 for AGs, 5 for spokescouncil)

10 Discuss

• Possible Topics

- Decide to stay or go when violent police are on their way
- Decide to stay or go in Congressman's office when half of demand is met

• Discussion

- Good process? Good decision? Improvements.
- Did everyone get a chance to speak, anyone left out, did decision reflect everyone's feelings?
- Sexism? Good vibes?

10 •• Stretch break

- Backrubs, game of knots, jelly roll, sitting in laps, mwaaa, song
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Actions and Next Steps

10 Presentation — Logistics of this Action

- Logistics of the upcoming action — date, time, transportation
- History and structure of this movement
- Affinity groups and clusters of AGs
- Affiliation with other local groups, etc.
- Self-education
- Local organizing — tabling, leafleting, speaking to groups, media, NV preps
- Create your own vigils, rallies, educational events, leafleting, etc.
- Building community — sharing internally, support after the action

5 Questions

40 Roleplay — Action Scenario

- 15 Set up
- 10 Roleplay
- 15 Discuss

• **Topics:**

- Blockade the gate
- Occupy the site

• **Roles:**

- Facility official — report to director of facility, job to quell demonstration or make it ineffective
- Police captain — report to city council, discuss with facility official, job to maintain order and law
- Police officers — report to police captain, job to maintain order and law
- Blockaders/Occupiers (provocateur) — report to each other, job to make demonstration powerful and effective
- News media (print journalist or TV crew) — report to editor, job to report the “news”
- Facility workers — report to supervisor (and ultimately to director of facility), job to work at facility, support family
- Spectators
- Nonviolence monitors

• **Discussion**

- at least one person from each role group, blockaders/occupiers last
- What worked and didn’t work?
- How could it be better?
- How did it feel for you?
- What did you learn?

15 Small Group — Share Feelings

— Break into groups of 2 - 4

— Give each person a chance to talk for 5 - 10 minutes

- Chance to express your feelings and emote — choose people you trust to tell
- Express your joy, fear, excitement, concerns, optimism, skepticism about the action, working with this group of people, or anything else

20 Affinity Group Formation

- Now time to join or create one or more AGs (if you want to)
- Choose people you trust — OK if you don’t want to be in an AG with someone
- Questions about the action, AGs
- Go around the circle — do you want to join an AG?
- Come to consensus on AGs
- Consent to nonviolence agreement if haven’t already
- Set up next meeting
- Plan to attend Legal/Jail Prep
- Date of monitor prep
- Exchange phone numbers, etc.

10 Evaluation — Goods, bads, improvements

Closing Circle — Group mwaaa

3 hours, 10 minutes

Affinity Groups Meet

Third Session (Legal/Jail)

10 Introductions

- Name, affinity group, something good that happened to you recently
- Literature

10 Agenda Review

- Review the agenda, make changes, get consensus of group including preparers
- Pick a timekeeper
- Circulate a list to get AG contact and alternate, phone numbers

Legal Issues

30 Presentation — Step-by-Step through the Arrest Procedure — Wallchart

10 Questions

Jail

20 Presentation — Jail and Solidarity Issues

15 Presentation — Jail Experiences

- People talk about their jail experiences (3 x 5)

10 Questions

10 •• Stretch break

- Backrubs, game of knots, jelly roll, sitting in laps, mwaaa, song
- Collect list of AGs

25 Roleplay — Jail

5 Set up

10 Roleplay

10 Discuss

• Possible Topics

- Obnoxious demonstrator taken away just before arraignment
- First-timers will be released, second-timers get 5 days jail time

• Discussion

- What happened?
- How did it feel for you?
- What did you learn?

- Before an action spend time in your affinity group meetings letting people express their feelings about jail

10 Presentation — Support and Recovery

- Jail/Actions can be emotionally draining — both dealing with police and other demonstrators
- Personal support — Lots of time to talk through experiences and cry, scream, shake, etc. in a safe environment (catharsis)
- May take as long to come down off an action as it took to prepare for it

20 Small Group — Share Feelings

— Break into groups of 3 or 4

— Give each person a chance to talk for 5 - 7 minutes

- Express your joy, fear, excitement, concerns, optimism, skepticism about the action, going to jail, working with this group of people, or anything else

10 Evaluation — Goods, bads, improvements

Closing Circle — Group mwaaa

3 hours, 0 minutes

Alternate Agendas for Different Occasions

| Full Actn | Con-dnsd | 1-Day Cond. | Gen-eric | NV Semnr | NV Sem Con. | |
|---|----------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------|--|
| 10 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | Presentation — Introduction to the Day |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | Presentation/Decision — Agenda Review |
| 20 | 15 | — | 20 | 15 | — | Group Introductions |
| Nonviolent Action (NVA) and Social Change | | | | | | |
| 15 | 10 | — | 15 | 15 | 10 | Small Group Discussion — Your Thoughts about NV Action |
| 5 | — | — | 5 | 5 | — | Brainstorm — Examples of NVA |
| 10 | 10 | — | 15 | 10 | — | Presentation — NVA: History and Successes |
| 10 | 10 | — | 10 | 10 | — | Brainstorm — What, Why, and How of NVA |
| 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 20 | 10 | Presentation — NVA: What, Why, and How |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | Questions |
| 10 | 10 | — | 10 | 10 | — | <i>Stretch break</i> |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 5 | — | Presentation and Questions — Nonviolence Agreement |
| 15 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 15 | — | Small Group Discussion — Your Personal Experiences with NV |
| 35 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 20 | — | Role Play — Hassle Lines |
| Organizing for Nonviolent Social Change | | | | | | |
| 15 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 30 | 30 | Presentation — NV Organizing and Campaigns for Social Change |
| 10 | 5 | — | 10 | 15 | 15 | Questions |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | — | Evaluation of first session — Goods, bads, improvements |
| 3h30 | 3h00 | 1h35 | 3h15 | 3h30 | 1h20 | Total |
| 50 | 50 | 10 | 50 | 50 | 10 | Lunch or Stretch Break (or Several Days Break) |
| 10 | 10 | — | 10 | 10 | — | Gather (Song, Game, Intros) |
| Affinity Groups and Support | | | | | | |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 | Presentation — Affinity Groups and Support |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | — | Questions |
| Co-operative Decision-Making and the Consensus Process | | | | | | |
| 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 10 | Presentation — Co-operative Decision-Making & Consensus |
| 10 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | Questions |
| 30 | 25 | 25 | 30 | 30 | — | Role Play — Co-operative Decision Making |
| 10 | 10 | — | 5 | — | — | <i>Stretch Break</i> |
| Actions and Next Steps | | | | | | |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 | — | — | Presentation — Logistics of this Action |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | — | — | — | Questions |
| 40 | 30 | 30 | 30 | — | — | Roleplay — Action Scenario |
| 15 | 15 | — | — | 10 | — | Small Group — Share Feelings |
| 20 | 10 | — | — | — | — | Affinity Group Formation |
| 10 | 10 | — | — | 10 | 10 | Evaluation — Goods, bads, improvements |
| 3h10 | 2h40 | 1h40 | 2h00 | 1h40 | 30 | Total |
| Days | Days | 10 | — | — | — | Stretch Break (or Several Days Break) |
| 10 | 10 | — | — | — | — | Introductions |
| 10 | 10 | — | — | — | — | Agenda Review |
| Legal /Jail | | | | | | |
| 30 | 20 | 20 | 15 | — | — | Presentation — Step-by-Step through the Arrest Procedure |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 | — | — | Questions |
| 20 | 20 | 20 | 10 | — | — | Presentation — Jail and Solidarity Issues |
| 15 | 5 | 10 | 5 | — | — | Presentation — Jail Experiences |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 | — | — | Questions |
| 10 | 10 | 5 | — | — | — | <i>Stretch break</i> |
| 25 | 20 | — | — | — | — | Roleplay — Jail |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 | — | — | Presentation — Support and Recovery |
| 20 | 15 | 15 | 15 | — | — | Small Group — Share Feelings |
| — | — | 10 | — | — | — | Affinity Group Formation |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | — | — | Evaluation — Goods, bads, improvements |
| 3h00 | 2h30 | 2h00 | 1h10 | 0h00 | 0h00 | Total |
| 10h30 | 9h30 | 6h00 | 6h15 | 6h00 | 2h00 | Total Time (including lunch if applicable) |