

OCCUPY WALL STREET SPOKESCOUNCIL COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

(This is a living document to be amended as we learn by living with it)

Proposed by the Safer Spaces Working Group January 9th, 2012;
once approved it will be made available in multiple languages

I. Statement of Intention Upon Entering the Space

- I enter this space with a commitment to mutual respect, mutual aid, anti-oppression, conflict resolution, nonviolence, and direct democracy.
- I recognize that I may still have a lot to learn about types of oppression and I commit to learn.
- I support the empowerment of each person in order to subvert the histories and structures of oppression that marginalize and divide us, such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, transphobia, religious discrimination, ageism, and ableism.
- I hold myself accountable to community decisions and work for the well being of all.
- I agree that if I violate any of the community agreements listed below, or act in a way that harms the community, I will accept the decision of the community and remove myself from the physical space.

II. AGREEMENTS

A. COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY, CONSENT, AND ANTI-OPPRESSION

- We commit to making OWS spaces physically accessible to all.
- We commit to making resources equally accessible to all.
- We do not engage in violence or threats of violence in this space.
- We get explicit consent before interacting physically, or using others' belongings.
- We affirm that consent is not just the absence of a "no," but the presence of a "yes."
- I acknowledge that different people in our community have different vulnerabilities to police or hospital interaction, due to their race, documentation status, immigration status, gender, economic situation, age, criminal justice or medical history, and experience with police violence.
- I will not use substances inside this space that may attract the attention of police and risk harm to our community.
- In the event that a person is harmed, it is their discretion to involve the police or not. The decision to call an ambulance is also theirs. This does not apply when someone is unconscious, their life is in immediate danger, or they are otherwise incapable of consenting.
- We respect everyone's names, preferred gender pronouns, and expressed identities. We make no assumptions about someone's race, gender, age or class identity based on their appearance. We also understand that no one is required to share information about their identities.
- We commit to ongoing awareness of our prejudices, the structures of oppression that affect our personal experiences, and our privileges (by virtue of being white, male, cis-gendered, able-bodied, a U.S. citizen, wealthy, and/or straight, among other identities) in this society.
- We recognize that certain behavior—such as shouting someone down in a meeting or trivializing oppression—can be triggering for survivors of sexual assault and/or those who have been on the receiving end of different and multiple forms of oppression.
- We speak only for ourselves, and commit to hearing each other and creating opportunities for all voices to be heard, especially those that have been historically marginalized or silenced.

B. COMMITMENT TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- We accept a shared responsibility to hold one another and ourselves accountable to these agreements. If we feel that an agreement is not being respected, we will express that concern without violence, judgment, or assumption of intent by others.
- As a community, we commit to developing creative and transformative ways to address harm. When someone is harmed, we affirm that the experience and decisions of the person harmed will guide our responses and next steps, while allowing all parties involved to transform the cycles of abuse and violence. Each decision making body will collectively develop their own meeting agreements for how people will interact with each other. Each meeting will begin with a reminder of these agreements, and reference will be made to them as needed. We agree that issues may arise that take priority over the meeting agenda and space needs to be given to address them immediately. Such priority is needed to create and support an anti-oppressive space.
- If an individual disrespects any of these community agreements we have the option to collectively implement the 6-step de-escalation process or require the individual to participate in the OWS grievance process (once it is agreed upon). Either process once followed may result in an individual being asked to leave for a set or indefinite period of time, or until agreement has been reached about conditions for return. Refusal to respect either process and leave when asked could result in the individual being removed from the space.
- Those who have committed harm in this space, or who have been called out for harm in the past and whose presence limits participation of others in this movement, may be asked to leave until the person has completed or is in compliance with an accountability process. We will work to coordinate with organizations that assist individuals who are overcoming addiction or who have committed abuse or violence.

6-Step De-escalation Process

(This 6 step process was designed by the Safety Cluster to address conflict in the Zuccotti Park encampment.)

1. DISCOVER – person sees what’s going on
2. CALM – Neighbors / friends step in to initiate dialogue
3. SUPPORT – Call out for support/security/medics— group members approach as team, support and safer spaces go in first, de-escalation backs them up, steps up if need be. These groups can help address basic comfort needs, or encourage person in distress to get medical support. If can’t be resolved, go to next step.
4. DE-ESCALATE – de-escalation/security
5. PEACE COUNCIL – 1-2 reps each from de-escalation, safer spaces, medical, & support—assess for things like danger to self or others and responds appropriately. (Harmed person or people will guide actions taken, and group makes decision together.)
6. ACTION – Strategies for accountability other actions decided on by the peace council (including community-wide awareness raising, community direct action, or options of ejection, and as last resort of EMS or off-site police involvement.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and READINGS

Community Accountability within the People of Color Progressive Movement by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence: incite-national.org/media/docs/2406_cmty-acc-poc.pdf

“Feeling for the Edge of Your Imagination: Finding Ways Not to Call the Police” by Imagine Alternatives: imaginealternatives.tumblr.com

Learning Good Consent zine: awarela.org/models/white-supremacist-system

NYC Coalition for Safer Spaces: saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com “Rape Culture 101” by Melissa McEwan: shakespearessister.blogspot.com/2009/10/rape-culture-101.html

The Revolution Starts at Home edited by Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani & Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, zine: incite-national.org/media/docs/0985_revolution-starts-at-home.pdf and book: <http://www.southendpress.org/2010/items/8794.1>

Support zine: phillyspissed.net/node/18

“Supporting a Survivor of Sexual Assault” by UBUNTU: iambecauseweare.wordpress.com/supporting-a-survivor-of-sexual-assault

“Taking the First Step: Suggestions for People Called Out for Abusive Behavior” Deal With it Journal (originally in Clamor Magazine): fruitiondesign.com/dealwithit/02wispy.php

Towards Transformative Justice by GenerationFIVE: generationfive.org/downloads/G5_Toward_Transformative_Justice.pdf

“White Supremacist System” by AWARE-LA: awarela.org/models/white-supremacist-system