

We Feelin' AAIT?!
**(Abolitionist, Ancestral, Interdependent, & Transformative Strategies
for Home)**
S.O.S Safe Space Training Proposed Agenda
(100 Minutes)

WELCOME: 10 MINUTE ()

Take a minute to make sure everyone's in the right place and on the same page

1. Why Are We Here?

Want your home to become a Safe Space in the Safe Neighborhood Campaign? Join the Safe OUTside the System Collective as we build and practice abolitionist, ancestral, interdependent, and transformative strategies for safety and survival at home. (Because the police XYZ...) After this workshop, you and your household will be a Safe Space with the tools you need to identify, prevent, and de-escalate hate, state, and community violence in and around your home, house, or the places you stay.

2. Who is this Training For?

Anyone who wants to become more active in creating the kind of community that we all want to live in and where we practice methods of keeping ourselves and our neighbors safe without the need of policing from the State.

3. Handouts/Materials:

Community Security and De-escalation Handout Contents

- Assessing Risk to Participate in Security Team
- ALP's Definition of Violence
- Definition of Terms
- Security Protocol and Guidelines
- De-escalation: Strategies & Tactics
- Verbal and Physical De-escalation
- Responses to Violence
- Grounding Our Responses to Violence in AAIT
- Chain of Command and Arrest Protocol
- Safe Spaces Next Steps Safety Plan Worksheet
- Recent Incidents of Violence

4. Goals:

By the end of the training, you will be able to:

1. Identify how the four forms of violence - hate violence, state violence, interpersonal violence, and internalized violence present themselves.
2. Understand the connection between the different forms of violence and as specifically how homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, poverty, racism and gentrification present themselves in these forms.
3. Identify what violence, policing, and displacement, homophobic and transphobic violence impacting LGBTSTGNC POC looks like in our community.

4. Have safety strategies tips for Abolitionist, Ancestral, Interdependent, and Transformative (AAIT) interventions and safe methods of de-escalation.
5. Ground our responses to violence in AAIT (Ancestral, Abolitionist, Interdependent, Transformative).
6. Be equipped to act as a safe space, responding to the needs of community members experiencing forms of the four types violence as below.

BACKGROUND - 5 MINUTES ()

4. History

Talk about the history of SOS history of the safe space campaign, intro to ALP.

The Original Campaign

The safe neighborhood campaign emerged where in central Brooklyn where there was at least one murder a year against a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Trans, and Gender Non-Conforming LGBTSTGNC person of color. We are looking for alternatives to the criminal justice system because often when the police were called over community members were harassed, attacked or denied medical services.

The New Campaign

The Safe Neighborhood Campaign seeks to end hate, community, and police violence against LGBTSTGNC people of color and our neighbors and allies. The goals of the Safe Neighborhood Campaign are to empower community members to prevent violence before it starts, intervene while violence is happening, and to build stronger relationships among our neighbors, families, housemates, friends, intimate partners, cultural workers, small businesses, and community

New Campaign Goals:

- Build a core network of survivors, community leaders, cultural workers, and longtime residents who are committed to increasing transformative justice practices in Central Brooklyn.
- Build, share, and practice transformative strategies for community safety and wellness that work for us, on our blocks, and in our neighborhoods.
- Through building and practicing transformative justice in Central Brooklyn, we will change the impacts of violence, policing, and displacement, and develop stronger safety networks in our neighborhoods.

AGREEMENT TO PURPOSE – 5 MINUTES ()

5. Purpose and Concerns

Invite discussion on concerns about being a safe space household

- In our experiences, there are a lack of resources in preventing racist, misogynist, homophobic and transphobic community and state violence.
- The purpose of this training is to think through violence prevention, de-escalation, and response for LGBTSTGNC POC and our neighbors of color and homophobia and transphobia as individuals and households.
- We are also training small businesses, cultural workers, grassroots organizations, and faith based and education spaces. After this training, you'll be a Safe Space of the Safe Neighborhood Campaign!

- Highlight an important case that time a home or household acted as a safe space (sanctuary, protection from police/ICE) could have used a safe space (i.e. especially a case that occurred near them)
 - We appreciate your participation and have an interest in your businesses success and that's why we want to encourage our community to support your (business/organization) We Have a membership of over 1500 and will advertise your space on website. Overall we are really looking for community healing and safety.
- What are your concerns in being a safe space as a household? (Disruptive guests, inviting drama, etc.)

EXERCISE 1: 15 min ()

- Tiger goat exercise
- Identify tiger and goat. Excuse them from space. Explain to everyone else that it's their role to support the self-determination, safety, and wellbeing of all participants, especially tiger and goat. Remind everyone to practice consent. No touching without permission! Use the next minute to strategize how you might support goat and tiger.
- Check in with the tiger and the goat outside the room, and explain that the folks inside are animals at a safari party (or a different space that makes more sense for this crowd) here to support their safety and self-determination. It's important to know that there are a lot of assumptions about tigers and goats. Ask them to make up a scenario in which their safety must be supported, and explain that first the goat will go in, and then about 45 seconds later, the tiger will head in.
- Invite in the goat, and then invite the tiger about 45 seconds later.
- End the game when it feels right, not exceeding 5 minutes.
- Debrief: First, tiger, how was that for you? Second, goat, how did you feel? Did y'all feel supported? Overwhelmed? Held? Everyone else, what are some strategies we practiced or witnessed?
- Why is this important?
- Metaphor for who is protecting who, safe space protecting community members
- Express the importance of Safe Spaces in preventing racial, homophobic, transphobic and gender based violence.

WORDS WE USE – 10 MINUTES ()

6. Terminology: What IS Violence?

Explain to participants that we believe that violence happens due in part due to these forms of prejudice and hatred. Societal bias allows people to believe that violence, anger, hatred, against LGBTSTGNC people of color is okay. By not allowing these attitudes in your space you can prevent violence.

EXERCISE 2: When I say the word violence, what comes up for you? What feelings, what colors, what sounds?

**content/trigger warning: the next few sections will talk about what violence looks like in our communities

- **Violence**

§ **Hate Violence** (harassment and physical attacks based on individuals gender, sexuality, race ethnicity, religion, etc.)

§ **Government/Police Violence** (unnecessary police presence, harassment of individuals, harassment of drivers, arrests, assault)

§ **Inter-Community Violence** (intimate partner violence, fights between folks at the event)

§ **Internalized Violence** (when we believe and internalize the messages we receive from hate, police, and inter community violence)

EXERCISE 3: Let's really look at them together now and see how violence shows up in our day-to-day lives. Put the following kinds of violence up in different quadrants on butcher paper leaving space for examples of the various forms they might take from participants. What are examples of each kind of violence in households in central Brooklyn? – 5 Minutes for forms of Violence, then 3 minutes per term (30 minutes total)

Big paper /brainstorm or small group discussion depends on group size - i.e., what does racism manifested look like? Fill in what participants don't get.

Hate Violence

§ Murder

§ Sexual Assault

§ Physical Attack (can separate based on injuries and whether or not weapons are involved), Threats (I'm gonna kill u) (verbal or through vandalism),

§ Harassment, direct slurs or insults,

§ Intimidation (hostile looks, attempting to frighten people),

§ Anti-gay jokes, saying homophobic things, (can escalate)

What do you think are some examples of government or police violence against lgbtstgnc people? What have you witnessed in your community?

Government/Police Violence

· Examples: JG and Tiffany, Alister's Story

· Isolation/ostracizing ignoring someone's presence mistreat or gloss over (when something happens to trans women no info as opposed to matthew shepard, no media attention)

· Prevalence of community based hate violence (at least one murder a year ex : Rashawn Brazell Roberto "Pancho" Duncanson)

· ICE banging on the door: you live with people whose immigration status you don't know

· Role of over policing in the neighborhood and our community (JG and tiffany the lab every weekend)

· Murder

· Sexual violence and harassment

· Physical abuse

· Harassment (i.e. stop and frisk)

· Gender/sex policing (identification and documentation restrictions)

· Refusal/failure to prosecute homophobic or transphobic violence

· Police not providing safety ex: Not showing up. Refusing services.

· Restriction to public accommodations and resources (ex: bathrooms)

· Welfare social services Medicaid

- Sexual Harassment and assault

Inter-Community Violence

- Intimate partner violence
- Family violence
- Gang violence
- Financial violence (withholding money that is needed like child support, money for food etc.)

Internalized Violence - Self-told messages of violence such as:

- Self-harm
- Isolation
- Body shaming
- Slut-shaming
- Internalized homo/transphobia
- Internalized racism
- Internalized misogyny

Even the lowest forms of violence because people tend to increase their level of violence. We could be potentially interrupting an assault in the future. Changing the climate in our community - and in ourselves - is huge.

7. Terminology B: What is Homophobia, Transphobia Heterosexism, Homophobia, Transphobia, Misogyny, Poverty, Racism, Gentrification, and Violence?

EXERCISE 4: Let's take a look at some more words. Where should they go on our chart? Let folks know that this is in their handout if they want to look at it more in depth or if they get stuck on a part of it. OR crowd source 2 definitions for each word. Look at handout for more info

· **Heterosexism**

An assumption that heterosexual behavior is normal, correct, and superior to homosexual behavior. This is often illustrated in statements like "I don't want to know what they do" or "They don't have to throw their lifestyle in my face", which marginalizes the behaviors and experiences of homosexual people.

· **Homophobia**

Fear, prejudice, discrimination and hatred of people who love and have sexual desire with people of the same gender.

· **Transphobia/ Gender Nonconforming People**

Fear, prejudice, discrimination and hatred of transgender, gender nonconforming people or those who fall outside "traditional gender expression or roles." Transphobia creates unequal social systems for trans and gender nonconforming people which impact their opportunities and access in all spheres of their lives.

· **Misogyny**

Misogyny is the hatred, fear, prejudice and discrimination of women and femmes. Misogyny manifests in oppressive patriarchal systems and societies which continue to place women in subordinate roles and positions in every sphere of life. It is the root cause of financial inequality experienced by women all over the world, and therefore relegates women to roles that are perceived to be inferior or "less than".

- **Poverty**

Fundamentally, poverty is the inability of having choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation. (UN definition). 15.4% of people in New York State are living in poverty (less than 24,250 for a family of four). Of people who fit this definition, 22.6% are Black, 16.4% are Asian American, 25.5% are Latinx, Indigenous are 24.9% and 11.3% are white.

- **Racism**

Wellman (1993) defines racism as "culturally sanctioned beliefs, which, regardless of intentions involved, defend the advantages whites have because of the subordinated position of racial minorities". Under this understanding, **racism is synonymous with white supremacy** and shapes the institutions that surround us every day. The outcomes of racism can be measured in terms of inequality in income, wealth accumulation, and access to education, and other resources. From housing to employment and educational opportunities, racism, and its by-product, colorism, shape our chances at a fair and equal life.

- **Gentrification**

[“The State of New York City’s Housing and Neighborhoods in 2015”](#) defines gentrification as “rapid rent growth in low-income neighborhoods.” But this is only part of the picture. This is generally a planned expansion which leads to a shrinking pool of available low-income housing and therefore minority displacement. This causes families are left unable to stay in the areas they have been living for generations. Gentrification displaces social safety networks pushing us further into isolation from each other. This sense of un-rootedness and disconnection leaves us more vulnerable to a culture of violence and fear of one another. Gentrification is a strong force that interrupts and actively destroys community

- **Xenophobia**

You feelin’ AAIT?! – 35 minutes ()

8. Ancestral, Abolitionist, Interdependent, Transformative (AAIT) De-escalation Intro

1. **Ancestral**: from our people, from the earth, spun from dreams and desire, what our grandmas did, what Harriet did, FROM US and from within
2. **Abolitionist**: destroys the prison industrial complex, swerves the state
3. **Interdependent**: we need each other’s support to survive, like when two people are sitting on the floor and leaning on each other back to back so that both are supported, or like if we imagined that we are all simultaneously sunflowers and watering cans.
4. **Transformative**: changes root causes of violence and generational trauma rooted in the legacies of colonialist/state, interpersonal, and communal violence, does not punish, push out, or criminalize, holds the multiplicity that those who do harm are often survivors, and supports transformation of all parties

EXERCISE 5: “Is your strategy AAIT?” List the 4 Responses with examples from participants. crowdsource 2 responses for each. 10 minutes

9. Tips for AAIT Responses (In the Handouts)

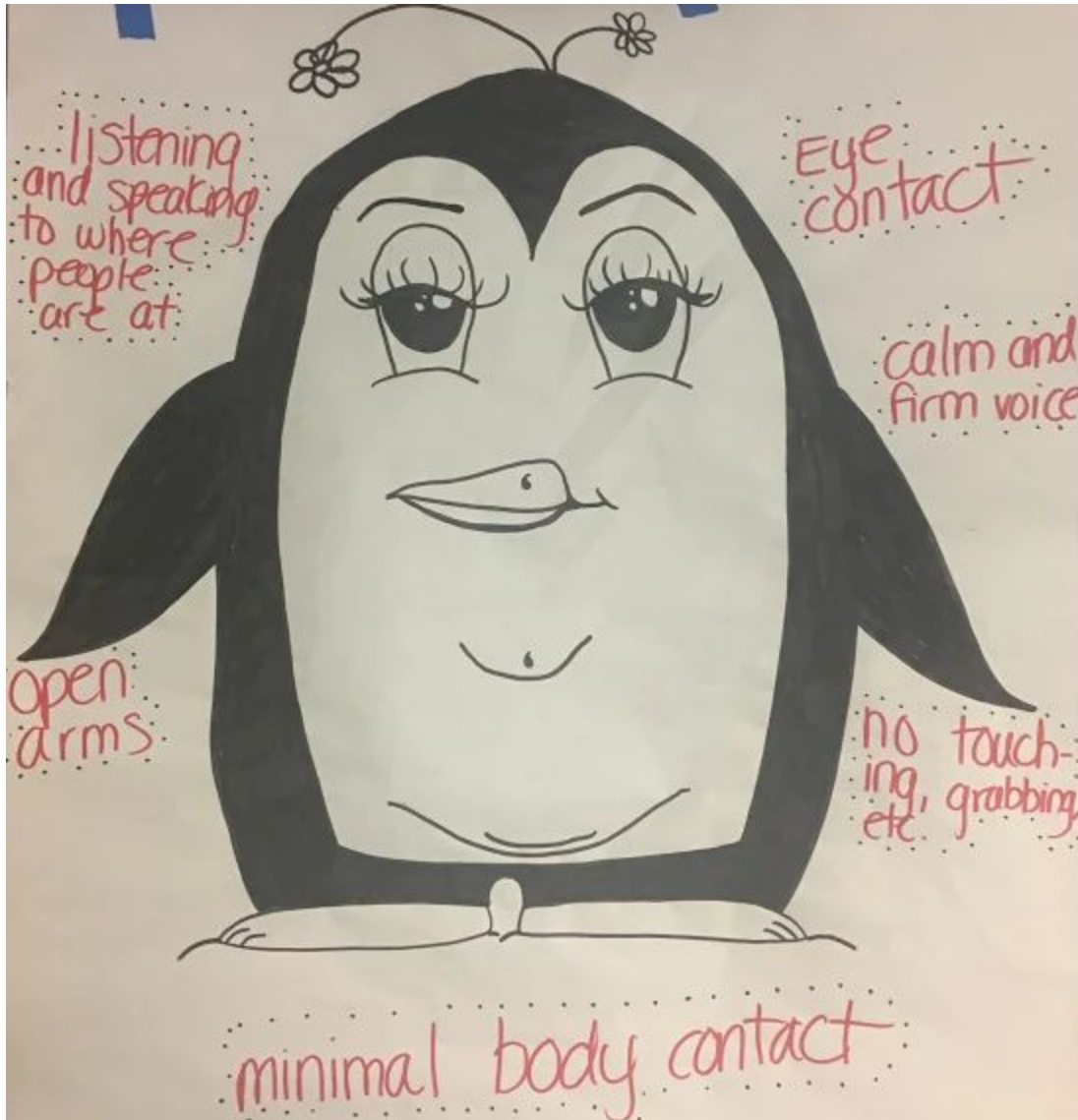
b) DECIDING WHETHER TO INTERVENE (Simone)

- Assess the risk to your personal safety.
- Have an Exit Strategy.
- Can you get out of the situation? Can you get a person out of a situation?
- ‘Im not trying to hurt you, it’s me, It’s time to leave.’
- Relationships
- What’s your relationship to the people involved? How does that impact intervention?
- Consent
- How do you know it's ok to intervene? How can you ask? What do you do if you don't get consent?
- Impact
- What are the costs and benefits of the situation? How will you make sure you don't make things worse?

c) VERBAL TACTICS (Ejeris Dixon) (popcorn style reading from guidelines) ()

- Prevent
- Allow silence
- Gather people
- Distract: Physically insert you between them, make eye contact
- Re-focus: Make eye contact to make the person more present
- Use Humor
- Empathize: “I hear what you’re trying to say but,” “I understand where you’re coming from however,”
- Give choices: “We have two choices here...”; “if this continues would you rather x or y”
- Use your voice as a tool. Speak confidently, calmly, slowly, and clearly, vary volume depending on the context, say please and thank you.
- Use your posture: stand as equals or slightly lower, do not try to tower over someone, if you can help it.
- Body language: natural facial expression, eye contact, avoid pointing, lean towards folks, nod to show you’re listening, show that you care
- Practice Active Listening. Figure out what the person desires or needs.
- Offer to debrief or follow up, but don't make false promises.
- Trust your own tactics (stuff we didn't list, etc.)! They work!

d) Don't blame the survivor and never minimize the incident but ask questions and set boundaries if necessary



10. (ROLE PLAY) Grounding your Response to Violence in AAIT (all facilitators take a group)

Exercise 6: When we put it all together, what does it look like? Use list of scenarios from butcher on types of violence, and then role play them ALL AT HOME (person causing harm, person experiencing harm, and 2 engaged bystanders). Describe with participants, get their input, possibly in break out groups to save time. 15 minutes

Examples:

- Role Play based on incident of violence (i.e. homophobic guest) that they act out
- Pick an incident that could happen inside their home
- Ex: T What happens if there's a knock on your apartment door, and the voice says, "OPEN UP! ICE!". Your home has 2 guests staying, and you're unsure of your roommates and guests' immigration status. What do you do? when an employee of frequent customer is being homophobic/transphobic
- You hear your roommate getting beat up by his/her/their partner. What do you do?

11. (ROLE PLAY DEBRIEF) Pulling it All Together ()

Ask participants' opinions about what they saw. list the tips we saw them use. Brainstorm tips that could have helped in this situation. (add in these tips if they do not) 10 minutes

Remember the 2 goals: maximize personal safety (i.e. de-escalate) and send message of social unacceptability

12. Conclusion – 10 minutes ()

SIGN UP FOR THE SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD CAMPAIGN

What is 1 strategy that you commit to try twice?