In Our Hands

Using a Community Accountability Approach

to Address Sexual Violence, Abuse, & Oppression.

Zine Issue #1

Send comments & feedback to:

in.our.hands.pgh@gmail.com

check out updates at:

in-our-hands-pgh.tumblr.com

In Our Hands is a grassroots community accountability and mediation reading, discussion, action and support group dedicated to issues of abuse, sexual violence, and broader modes of oppression. We focus on radical communities but also aim to provide helpful resources and useful models for any community, and aim to eventually include young teens, who are being introduced to issues of sex, consent, autonomy, and community for the first time.

We hold regular meetings that are open to all. Our meetings are focused on assigned readings, in order to provide a comfortable entry-point for both those with general interest about the topic as well as survivors who might not want to share their personal story right away, if ever. Our group, however, is always open to sharing personal trauma in a safe space, as well as taking direct action should the need arise.

We've been meeting since the beginning of October 2015, and this zine is a reflection of some of the most helpful and important things that we've learned thus far. We plan for this zine to be the first version of many, many more to come, as our knowledge, experience, skills, and understanding grow. We realize that we haven't covered everything here—for example, while we include an in-depth discussion of terms and language, and take a stab at describing the skeletal structure of any community accountability process, we don't broach the subject of helping a survivor break their silence in the first place. We plan to confront this and other issues of great importance in near-future versions of the zine.

1

Critical Resistance, Resources for Addressing Harm, Accountability, and Healing,
Critical Resistance (CR) is a national grassroots organization building a movement to abolish the prison industrial complex (PIC):

http://criticalresistance.org/resources/addressing-harm-accountability-and-healing/

Rape is Real,   https://rapeisreal.wordpress.com/category/ben/

If a Man Commits Rape in Newtown and No One Knows How to Deal with it.. Then Did it Ever Really Happen? Zine published by Sprout Distro:

http://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/accountability-consent/if-a-man-commits-rape/

Dangerous Spaces: Violent Resistence, Self-Defense, & Insurrectional Struggle Against Gender, Zine published by Untorelli Press:

http://untorellipress.noblogs.org/files/2011/12/dangerous.pdf

Accounting for Ourselves: Breaking the Impasse Around Assault and Abuse in Anarchist Scenes, Published by Crimthinc.:

http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.com/2013/04/accounting-for-ourselves-2013.html

In Our Hands: Community Accountability as Pedagogical Strategy, By Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo:

http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.com/2012/08/in-our-hands-community-accountability.html

We are constantly adding more resources to our tumblr page, under "Reading and Resources" Please check back often!!

www.in-our-hands-pgh.tumblr.com

in.our.hands.pgh@gmail.com

We hope to use this zine to compile and share some insights and to start a larger conversation that will continue indefinitely as part of our larger goal to confront oppression and build healthy communities, and hope that discussions we begin today will add insight and direction for our future work.

We love feedback!!

Please write to us at:

in.our.hands.pgh@gmail.com

The tracing patterns for the embroidery

For many of us, our instinct after or during a crisis is to seek help from institutions in authority, in particular from law enforcement. While survivors may choose this path in good faith, there are a number of reasons why survivors may choose to avoid it.

First, law enforcement and the criminal justice system seek to preserve an oppressive status quo, which is dangerous for marginalized groups, such as people of color, women, or LGBT people, even when they are the ones who have requested protection.

Secondly, the criminal justice system leaves the burden of proof on the survivor, and questions their credibility. This is in direct conflict with our principle of never doubting the survivor. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), only about 20% of rapes reported to police lead to an arrest; less than 10% lead to a conviction. We believe this is a direct consequence of the criminal justice system's attitude of skepticism toward survivors.

3

READINGS & RESOURCES

The Revolution Starts at Home: Taking Risks, Implementing Grassroots Community Accountability Strategies, Written by a collective of women of color from Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA): Alisa Bierria, Onion Carrillo, Eboni Colbert, Xandra Ibarra, Theryn Kigvamasud'Vashti, and Shale Maulana:

https://solidarity-us.org/files/Implementing%20Grassroots%20Accountability%20Strategies.pdf

Betrayal: A critical Analysis of Rape Culture in Anarchist Subcultures, Published by Words to Fire Press:

https://libcom.org/library/betrayal-critical-analysis-rape-culture-anarchist-subcultures

Witch Hunt: Addressing Mental Health and Confronting Sexual Assault in Activist Communities, by Annie Anxiety, made available by Philly is Pissed:

http://www.phillyspissed.net/sites/default/files/ZINE%20Witch%20Hunt.pdf
http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.com/2012/04/thinking-through-perpetrator.html

Thinking Through Perpetrator Accountability, Published in Rolling Thunder #8, a quarterly journal by Crimethinc.:

http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.com/2012/04/thinking-through-perpetrator.html

Incite! National network of radical feminists of color. Community Accountability resources page:

http://www.incite-national.org/page/community-accountability

Creative Interventions Toolkit, A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence, Pre-release version. The CI Interventions Team including partners from Asian Women's Shelter, La Clinica de la Raza, Narika & Shimtuh is working hard to transform our on-the-ground work into useful tools for community-based violence intervention:

http://www.creative-interventions.org/tools/toolkit/
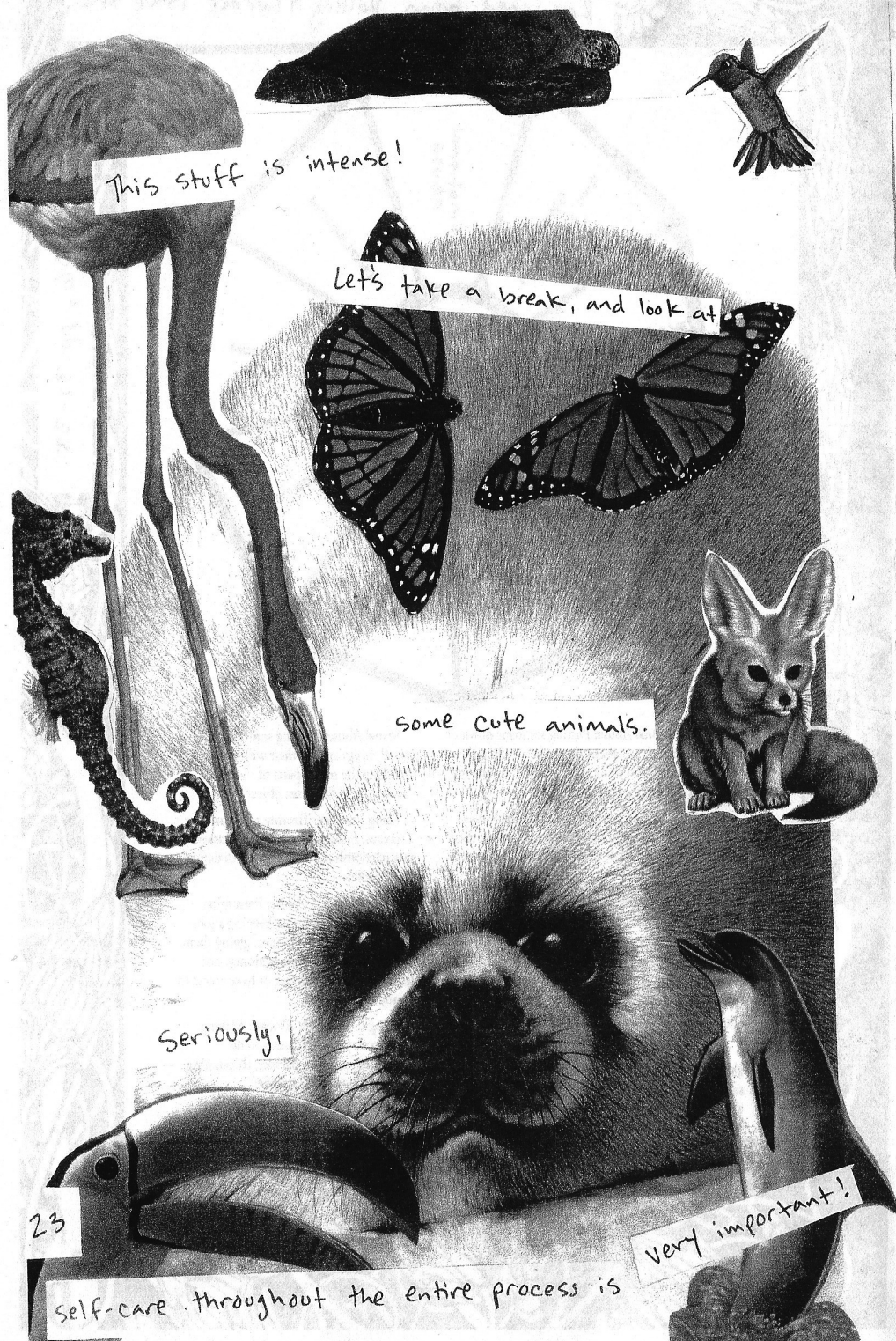
24

This stuff is intense!

Let's take a break, and look at

some cute animals.

Seriously,

very important!

self-care throughout the entire process is

Perhaps most importantly, even the stated goals of traditional institutions, from the criminal justice system to anti-violence agencies such as shelters, may be significantly different from our goals. At most, the institutional approach may result in a punishment for the perpetrator or a temporary safe space for the survivor. But it doesn't address long-term recovery and healing for the survivor or rehabilitation for the perpetrator, or the responsibility of communities to prevent future abuse and sexual assault. Punitive approaches are isolating, focusing on the survivor and perpetrator as individuals, rather than members of a living community.

Survivors are entitled to seek help from established resources, including the criminal justice system. Survivors are entitled to seek punishment for their perpetrators. Additionally, these approaches can help survivors stay safe, at least in the short-term, and that should be the first priority. However, our approach to community accountability and the traditional institutional approach are fundamentally in conflict, and if a survivor chooses to utilize both, they may have to navigate these points of conflict.
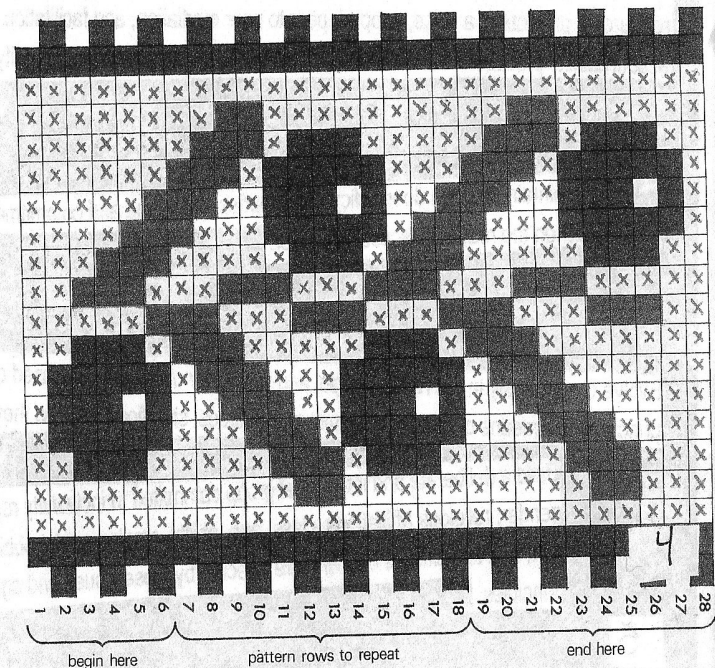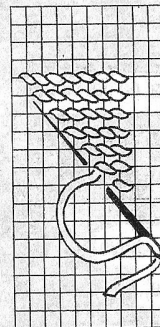
begin here   pattern rows to repeat   end here

Common Goals of our Group:

Promote self-determination and community confidence to deal with high-conflict situations and work to stop physical, emotional, mental, and structural violence, as well as all other forms of violence, aggression, discrimination, misogyny, and oppression.

Promote collective action against sexual assault and abuse that moves beyond complete reliance on a criminal justice system which often leaves minority groups and survivors powerless and re-victimized.
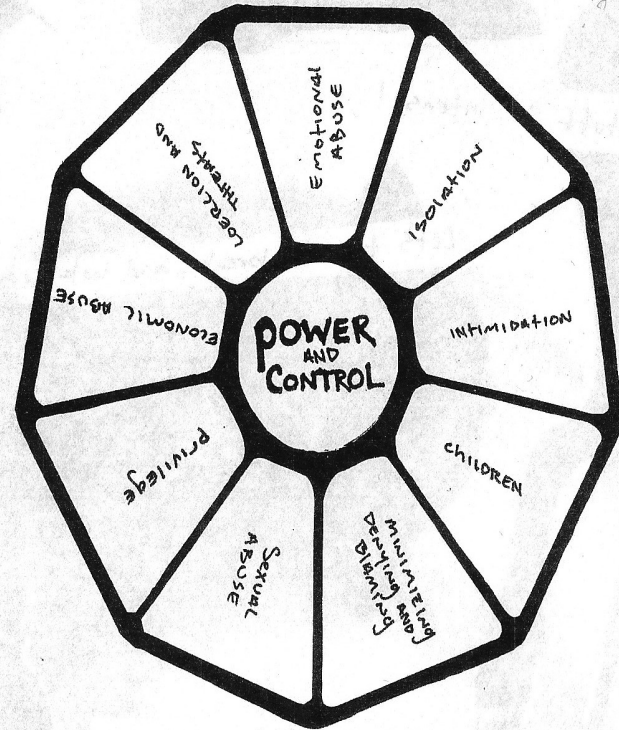
Prioritize the needs and safety of survivors.

Use readings and discussions as a basis for skill-building and creating a network to provide resources, protection, a voice, support, peer to peer mediation, and facilitation of community accountability processes for survivors, as desired by the survivor or community affected.

Maintain an open door policy that includes a dialogue and commitment that do not stop when the reading discussion is over.

Evolve continuously in the reach, scope, and inclusivity of our actions based on the above principles (by means of ideas and opinions, resources, situations, etc., as they arise).

Build a deliberate and intentional group committed to inclusivity regardless of race, sex, gender, religious affiliations, class, age, ability, employment, hobbies, social/cultural niche, etc., and to include those who are affected by these issues and agree with these goals and principles.

POWER AND CONTROL

- Emotional Abuse
- Isolation
- Intimidation
- Children
- Minimizing, Denying and Blaming
- Sexual Abuse
- Privilege
- Economic Abuse
- Coercion and Threats

Using Emotional Abuse: Putting someone down or making them feel bad about themselves, calling them names, making them think they're crazy, humiliating them and making them feel guilty.

Using Isolation: Controlling what someone does, who they see and talk to, what they read, where they go, limiting their outside involvement, using jealousy to justify actions.

Using Intimidation: Making someone afraid by using looks, gestures, or loud voice, destroying their property, abusing pets, displaying weapons.

Using Children: Making someone feel guilty about the children, using children to give messages, using visitation to harass someone, threatening to take the children away.

Minimizing, Denying, Blaming: Making light of abuse and not taking concerns about it seriously, saying abuse didn't happen, shifting responsibility for abusive behavior, saying they caused it.

Sexual Abuse: Making someone do sexual things against their will, physically attacking the sexual parts of the body, treating them like a sex object.

Using Privilege: Treating someone like a servant, making all the "big" decisions in a relationship, being the one to define gender roles.
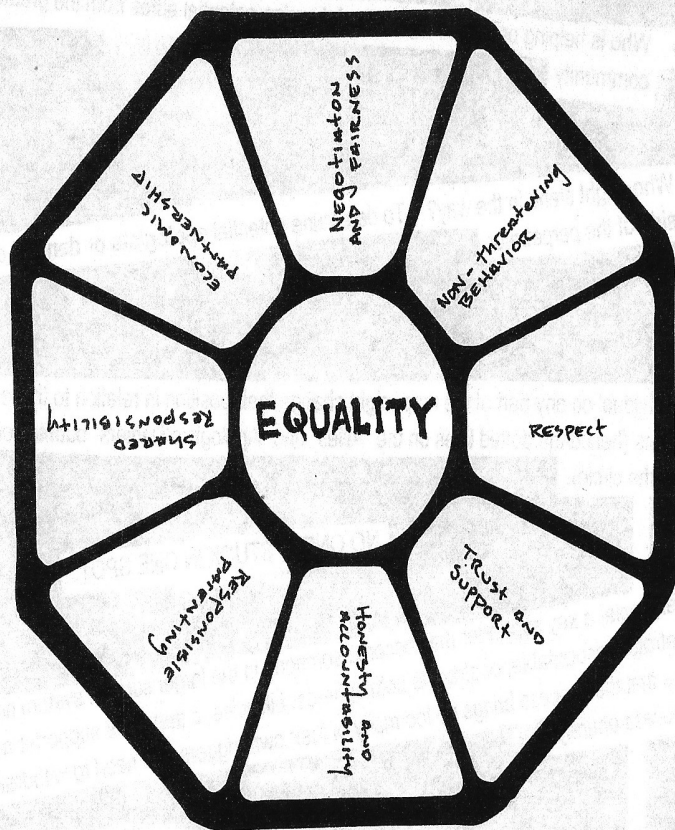
Using Economic Abuse: Preventing someone from getting or keeping a job, making them ask for money, giving them an allowance, taking their money, not letting them know about or have access to family income.

Using Coercion & Threats: Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt a partner, threatening to leave, threatening suicide.

EQUALITY

(octagon diagram with the following segments surrounding the center word EQUALITY)

- Negotiation and Fairness
- Non-Threatening Behavior
- Respect
- Trust and Support
- Honesty and Accountability
- Responsible Parenting
- Shared Responsibility
- Economic Partnership

Negotiation and Fairness: Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict, accepting change, being willing to compromise.

Non-Threatening Behavior: Talking and acting so that others feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves and doing things.

Respect: Listening to others non-judgmentally, being emotionally affirming and understanding, valuing opinions.

Trust and Support: Supporting others' goals in their lives, respecting their right to their own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

Honesty and Accountability: Accepting responsibility for self, acknowledging past use of violence, admitting being wrong, communicating openly and truthfully.

Responsible Parenting: Sharing parental responsibilities, being a positive non-violent role model for the children.

Shared Responsibility: Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work, making family decisions together.

Economic Partnership: Making money decisions together, making sure both partners benefit from financial agreements.

LANGUAGE!

As our group has evolved, we have had many discussion on how we use terminology and language. When we say something, what do we really mean? What is included and what is not? To ensure we all have the tools needed for this discussion, we wanted to explain how we use certain terms to talk about accountability and sexual violence.

First, a note about gender: while we do not wish to hide the fact that a majority of survivors are women or people who don't fit into the gender binary, and the majority of perpetrators are men, we strive to use gender neutral language throughout. We do not wish to obscure the fact that violence has historically, and still is consistently used to justify and uphold colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. However, we also acknowledge that anyone can be a survivor, perpetrator, or both. Thus, when we use the pronoun "they", we are not necessarily talking about a group of people, but are attempting to obscure gender in order to avoid oversimplifying anyone's personal experience.

That said, let's begin with **Rape Culture**, which is the normalization of sexual violence and rape due to societal attitudes about sexuality and gender. Rape culture seeks to excuse, condone, normalize, and encourage interpersonal, sexual, and intimate violence. Rape culture can be as subtle and pervasive as billboards that objectify women, or as direct as street harassment. Rape culture encourages non-consensual feelings of entitlement to, or devaluation of, someone else's body and/or a disrespect for one's autonomy. It is an abuse of power dynamics and the result of patriarchy and white male supremacy.

When we say **Accountability** or "being held accountable", we mean taking responsibility one's abusive, violent, harassing or oppressive actions. We mean acknowledging these actions, and making major strides to change. We mean dropping one's guard and defensiveness, and showing humility and a desire to stop and prevent these actions from reoccurring. We mean more than just a verbal or written apology, we mean TAKING ACTION to change, to create safer and more inclusive communities for everyone, to end rape culture, patriarchy, all forms of misogyny, racism and white supremacy, sexism, and oppression in any form.

When we talk about **Community**, we are referring to networks of individuals who share some commonality, whether it be time, space, resources, interests, or a certain need or desire to "come together" and cooperate outside of one's daily functions (such as a political movement, or in the wake of catastrophe). Community can develop organically, or can be intentionally formed. Community can be the people with whom you work, pray, play sports, share hobbies, or make art. It can be the people you organize with, or the people you interact with in your neighborhood. It can be your family, or the group of friends you regularly hang out with. Communities can intersect, and anyone can be part of multiple communities simultaneously.
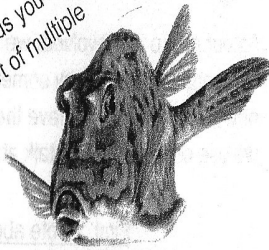
Cowfish
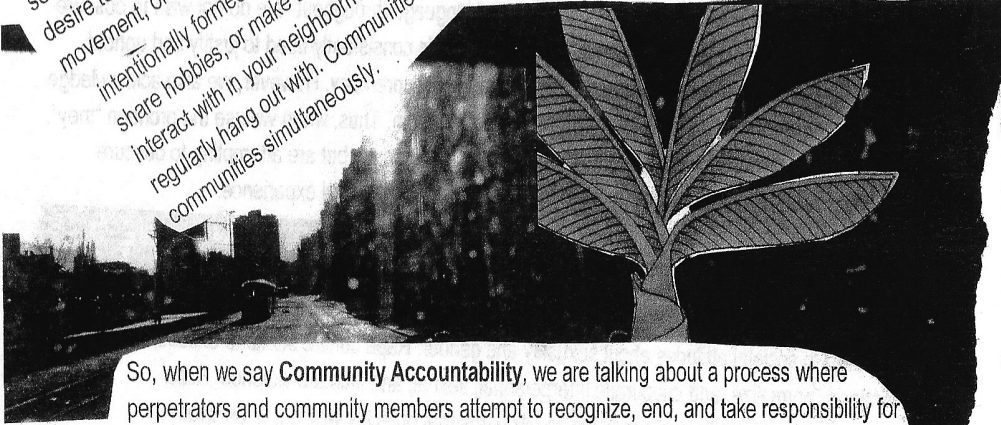
So, when we say **Community Accountability**, we are talking about a process where perpetrators and community members attempt to recognize, end, and take responsibility for abuse, violence, harassment, or oppression that occur within their community. We mean a process of self-reflection, self-improvement, and goal-setting for making long-term, concrete behavioral changes. Community accountability processes are always dictated by and centered around the needs of the survivor(s), and can include one or many perpetrators, as well as other community members acting as support for the survivor(s) and perpetrator(s)- by helping survivors to set goals and boundaries, offering healing support for the survivor(s), ensuring that the perpetrator(s) remain accountable by actively working towards the goals, respecting boundaries, and receiving support to process and heal from their abusive, violent, or oppressive behaviors.

Community accountability also means that the entire community is accountable for ignoring, minimizing, or encouraging violence. Community members have a responsibility to hold each other accountable for harm, and to educate each other and themselves on how to effectively intervene, stop, and prevent abuse, violence, and oppression. The community also has a responsibility to prioritize the safety, needs, and wishes of the survivor(s) over any formal process, to include a healing process for the survivor(s), and to encourage honest and trusting relationships amongst one another.

Likewise, those involved in the process will come and go as they and the survivor's needs and desires change. Throughout the whole process, these questions need to be asked consistently:

- Who is helping or might help? – To determine potential **allies** from the greater community

- Who might stand in the way? – To determine potential **apologists or deniers** on the side of the perpetrator

Any individual on any part of the map might change their position in relation to these questions (hence the dotted lines on the "Allies" and "Apologists/Deniers" bubbles on either side of the circle).

NO ONE IS STUCK IN ONE SPOT.

For example, a key supporter may become someone in the larger support system holding a perpetrator accountable, or straddle both spheres. Likewise, a survivor's supporter may realize that the process brings up too many of their own triggers and need to withdraw from the process entirely.

A neutral mediator may start to interfere with the greater survivor-centered goals of the process and become too authoritarian, at which point other members of the process (if not the survivor themselves) may need to ask that person to withdraw from the process, or hold themselves accountable by pausing and doing some self-reflective work before continuing to remain involved.

The most important thing to remember is that a community accountability process requires a great deal of **organization**, **cooperation**, **patience**, and **dedication**! Processes like these don't come easy, but the reward is tremendous.

The outcome of the survivor's needs and wishes are the **goals** that are set for the community accountability process as a whole. These goals can influence the actions of those who are in the "inner circle" of the process, as well as the greater community that may not necessarily have as much at stake in the accountability process but still should be responsible and responsive to it. Goals include:

- **Short Term**: Here (and throughout the process), the most important thing to ensure is the SAFETY of the survivor(s). This can include getting outside resources involved (such as the criminal justice system, traditional anti-violence governmental agencies) IF AND ONLY IF the survivor deems it helpful and desired. This can also include speaking with non-traditional "authorities" in the community, such as the people who organize events, run cooperative venues, or work at establishments where the survivor and perpetrator may intersect, in order to create safe spaces. Sometimes, if a perpetrator is unwilling to take responsibility for the harm they have done, an accountability process will stay in this short-term scope. Short-term actions can also include demands and retaliatory actions, such as making daily life difficult for the perpetrator until they start to take the accountability process seriously.

- **Intermediary/Temporary**: These goals can include ongoing mediations, seeking counseling and support groups for both the survivor and the perpetrator, and compiling resources for the community to learn about and begin to deconstruct rape culture and systems of oppression. The safety of the survivor(s) and their needs and wishes are still at the center of this step, even as the actions become more broad-based, deeper, and long-term in scope.

- **Long Term**: The survivor's supporters will have possibly determined who can remain a support to them on a long-term level, so that the onus of support for healing is not on the survivor. The same is hopefully true on the perpetrator's side, but for holding themselves accountable independent of location or community. On the community level, long term goals could include transformation in the ways that people think about and deal with issues of violence and oppression, as well as determining and enacting preventative measures so that the same kinds of violence and oppression are less likely to occur again.

Throughout the entire goal-setting process, those involved should take things step-by-step so as not to become overwhelmed with overarching goals that may be unattainable at the time. The goals are also free to be dynamic and changing as the process organically unfolds.
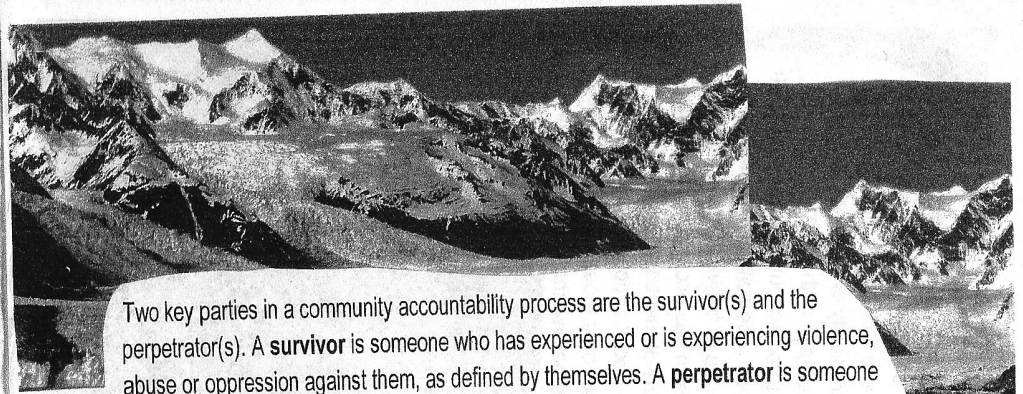
Two key parties in a community accountability process are the survivor(s) and the perpetrator(s). A **survivor** is someone who has experienced or is experiencing violence, abuse or oppression against them, as defined by themselves. A **perpetrator** is someone who has inflicted or is inflicting violence, abuse, or oppression onto another person, as defined by the survivor(s). Some communities choose to use different terminology for these two parties. For example, some may refer to a survivor as a victim. However, we feel that this term takes autonomy away from the survivor and places them in a position of powerlessness. For us, the term "survivor" is active and empowering, and implies self-determination and the power to decide for themselves how to deal with their own trauma.
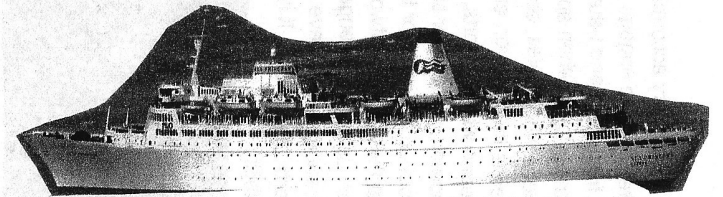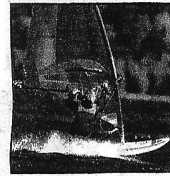
Some communities use terms like "abuser," "aggressor," "offender," "rapist," or "criminal" to refer to a "perpetrator," whereas other communities may use terms like "person doing harm." We have chosen to use "perpetrator" because we feel it is less stigmatizing than some terms, while not as mild as others. We acknowledge that "perpetrator" is a term used within the criminal justice system, and as our group wishes to move away from language within that system, we hope to continue conversation and find a more appropriate term (let us know if you have any suggestions!).
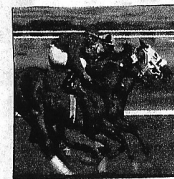
***Ideally, a community accountability process would also include **Allies/Supporters**. These are productive participants who form support systems either for the survivor, perpetrator, or both, but always work on behalf of the survivor. Supporters check in with and help create common goals for the accountability process, and ensure that the safety, needs, and wishes of the survivor remain central to the process.

When enacting a community accountability process, one may find the perpetrator(s) to be apprehensive or reluctant to engage in the process, or may outright deny any wrong-doing. This can be very frustrating and traumatizing for a survivor and their allies. It is just as frustrating and traumatizing when apologists question the credibility of the survivor. An **Apologist** is anyone who denies, enables, or excuses the actions of the perpetrator, silences or discredits the survivor, or is counter-productive to an accountability process. An apologist is someone who supports, enables, and reproduces rape culture. **Credibility** is often used to discredit, slander, or silence a survivor. The idea of "survivor credibility" lays the burden of proof on the survivor to not only prove that harm has occurred to them, but also to prove that they are a trustworthy source. Accusations of mental illness or slut-shaming are often used to challenge a survivor's credibilit. Social structures that uphold rape culture influence us to believe people with social power over those without. We must do work to unlearn this impulse. It is our principal to always believe the survivor and never judge their credibility.

We would like to take a moment now to discuss the difference between an accountability process and mediation. A **Mediation** process is used for situations of MUTUAL abuse or violence, and necessitates equal power from all sides to negotiate. Oppression can never be mediated, as it inherently involves an unequal balance of power. A mediation process involves third party neutral person(s) to act as mediator(s) between the two or more parties involved to reach a common goal.

It's important to note that the survivor can be as self-protective and reclusive as they need to be in order to heal, although this larger community action may be happening around them.

Key supporters can act as go-betweens and communicate the needs and wishes of the survivor to the neutral mediators and the perpetrator. This is visually indicated on the map by the dotted line at the top of the circle with the survivor within it. The survivor can cross that line—or not—as much as they wish.

The survivor also has the absolute right to stop any or all of the process at any point, if that's what they need for their healing which is the central goal of everything.

...tween the two parties are **neutral mediators**. These people, unlike the key support... can have more emotional and/or social distance from the people/situation at hand but must have maturity and social skills. The role of the neutral mediators is one of **communication** between the survivor's support network and the perpetrator's support network (or the survivor and the perpetrator directly, depending on the particular structure at hand).

Here, initial discussions are held that allow both parties to come to **a common understanding of what happened** and to **define the terms/language to be used** (i.e, was it abuse/violence/rape).

Also, this go-between space includes **check-ins with all involved**: how are they doing emotionally? What resources do they need? Are they self-reflecting and holding themselves accountable in the larger scheme of things? Finally, **resources for emotional and practical support** can be gathered and found in this neutral space. Key supporters can also become neutral mediators, or vice versa, at any time during the process as needed or desired by the survivor or the supporters themselves.


© CASQUE-HEADED FROG; CAROLYN M. MILLER
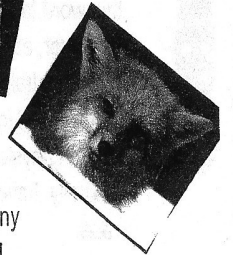
So what do we mean when we say violence, abuse or oppression? **Sexual Violence** is any attempt to take sexual agency away from another person. It can include (but is not limited to) rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment; or emotional, mental or physical abuse. We define **Sexual Harassment** as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or nonverbal gesturing, or physical harassment of a sexual nature. This can include giving "attitude" to or guilting someone who has not consented to sexual advances. **Abuse** can be sexual, emotional, physical, economical, or spiritual in nature. Abuse involves taking advantage of an imbalance of power, or a power struggle. Abuse plays on one's vulnerabilities, and is generally dynamic and ongoing: meaning abuse generally never occurs once, but over a course of time, and can have many faces. Abuse can be subtle or undeniably obvious. Sometimes it may be unclear to an outsider who is the survivor and who is the perpetrator of abuse. **Oppression** relies on an imbalance of power: it is the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice against a group or groups of people to maintain a status quo that privileges some over others. Oppression can, but need not, be extreme or violent, and can be found in legal, economic, social, or cultural realms. Oppression can be silent and embedded in everyday norms, habits, or symbols. Oppression limits people's freedom, and reduces their potential to be fully human. People who experience oppression experience very real suffering, pain, and trauma, which can also be passed along through generations. Some examples of oppressed groups are people of color, indigenous groups, women, trans*and queer people, elders, or people with disabilities. When a person or group experiences more than one type of oppression, we say they live within **Dangerous Intersections** of oppression.
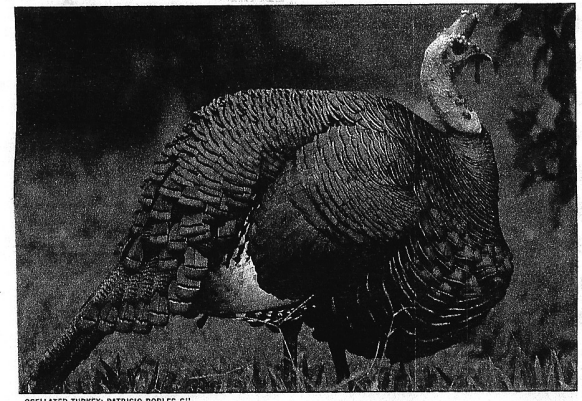
© REDDISH EGRET (WHITE PHASE); KENNETH GARRE...

OCELLATED TURKEY; PATRICIO ROBLES GIL
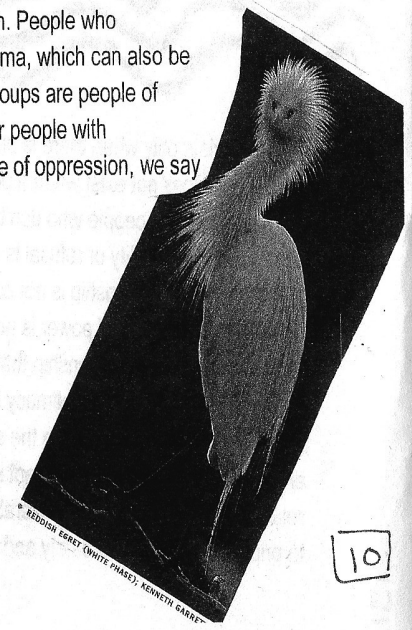
A word we choose not to use often, but feel needs to be defined is **Rape**. Many of us find this word to be too triggering, and instead refer to "sexual violence," when needed. However, as many perpetrators and apologists choose to convolute this word, we want to give it a straightforward meaning. We define rape as ANY non-consensual sex or sexual activity, and involves taking away someone's personal agency. Rape does not have to include physical force (s.a. against someone who is incapacitated). Touching someone sexually, having sex with, or engaging someone in sexual activity who has not consented is rape.

So what is consent? **Consent** is a voluntary, positive agreement to engage in intimacy, sex, sexual activity, or non-sexual touch. Consent includes confidence, enthusiasm, and free will.

Consent exists only when there is an ability for someone to safely and comfortably say "yes" or "no," and does not exist when a power dynamic is being abused. Consent should always be verbal between people who don't know each other's boundaries and desires. Silence is never consent. Inability or refusal is not consent. Discomfort is not consent. Being married or in a romantic relationship is not consent. Coercion is never consent. Assuming it's "ok" is not consent An abuse of power is not consent. When is doubt, just ask for consent. **Intimacy** involves a relationship that can be romantic, platonic, sexual, emotional, non-sexual physical, or verbal. Intimacy involves trust, vulnerability, and consent. However, intimate relationships are often the site of abuse and violence, where trust and vulnerability are taken for granted, and consent is assumed or dismissed altogether. Intimate relationships are inherently vulnerable, and require a responsibility among their participants to prioritize each other's safety and needs.

More than anything, a community accountability process is unique to the survivor, the people whom the survivor chooses to involve, and the greater community that is implicated by the abuse, violence, or oppression. A community accountability process is flexible and ever-changing.

MAP ANATOMY

On this map, the **survivor** is placed in the center with the word, "healing." The survivor is surrounded by two tiers of rings: key supporters who act as their direct voice/advocates, as well as the survivor's larger support system, who can act as a support for the key supporters, as well. These supporters can also move between rings, depending on their availability and/or the survivor's wishes.

This structure is mirrored in the network of the **perpetrator** but differentiated by the fact that while the survivor's circles are working toward their healing, the perpetrator's key supporters and larger support network are working toward holding the perpetrator accountable. This can of course include therapy and healing regarding the perpetrator's own history of abuse, but must work toward the ultimate goal of accountability as determined by the survivor.. A survivor also holds the right to request the inclusion or rejection of key supporters for a perpetrator to better meet the goals of the process. Also, as with the survivor, the perpetrator's supporters can move between rings as needed or desired.

Community Accountability Process Map

This map includes all of the components of a community accountability process given ideal conditions. It is partially a prescriptive structure, but it is more so a framework for thinking through ways to carry out a community accountability process given some underlying principles. Each process will be different depending upon the people involved and resources available.

Some **constants**, or underlying principles, that should ALWAYS be present are:

1. The survivor should be literally and figuratively at the center of the process—their needs and wishes are foremost, and they determine who's involved and what the action plan is (or is not).

2. The survivor's safety always comes first.

Some **variables** include:

1. How interconnected the survivor and the perpetrator are in terms of geography and social structure.
   a. In some instances, it might be very hard to extricate the survivor and perpetrator from one another's lives because of common or overlapping projects or social spaces. If the survivor wishes for partial or total separation from their perpetrator, extra effort will have to be taken.
   b. The survivor may also wish to remain in contact with the perpetrator, whether they are in an intimate or other kind of relationship. The survivor always retains this right, and it is the objective of the survivor's support group to create the safest and most holistic environment possible for the survivor to do this.
   c. In others, a survivor may not even be able to identify their perpetrator, in which case the only actionable elements may be the survivor's healing process, and the community doing deep work to look at the ways in which it can prevent future violence and oppression.

2. The number and quality of people who are (emotionally, psychologically, and/or logistically) available to act as supporters for either the survivor, perpetrator, or both; or neutral/mediating members of the accountability process. **It is important to remember that both healing and accountability can occur with minimal people involved.**

15

When dealing with accountability processes, we strive to help the survivor(s) find **Closure**. Closure can be anything that helps the survivor(s) find clarity and resolve from a traumatic experience. Closure is a feeling that the traumatic experience is over and can be dealt with, and is part (but not the end) of a healing process. A survivor may find closure with the accountability process itself, but may re-experience the trauma or be triggered to relive the trauma after the process is over. The unfortunate reality of a survivor is that they may never *fully* shed the trauma, but at least with a holistic healing process, they can learn how to work with it. This is why we feel including a long-term healing process for the survivor(s) is absolutely mandatory- although often overlooked- for any community accountability process.
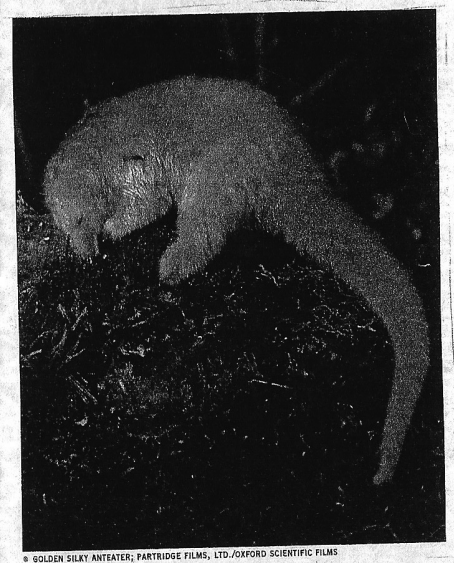
GOLDEN SILKY ANTEATER; PARTRIDGE FILMS, LTD./OXFORD SCIENTIFIC FILMS
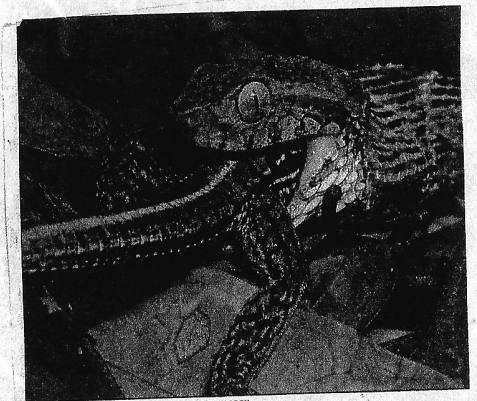
FER-DE-LANCE SWALLOWING LIZARD; MICHAEL FOGDEN

These terms are merely the tools for engaging in a complex and multidimensional accountability process. While some may feel that our toolkit is overburdened with semantics, others may find that it doesn't go far enough. And, while we as a group agree that investing too heavily in language can actually become disempowering to the survivor and the process as a whole, we also feel that having a solid basis from which to build is essential to any productive accountability process.

12

SEE BEYOND TAKING SIDES

WHO MIGHT STAND IN THE WAY?

(greater Community)

WHO MIGHT HELP?

Apologists/Deniers

Perpetrator holding themselves accountable independent of location/community

LONG TERM

dynamic & changing

LARGER SUPPORT SYSTEM

PERPETRATOR(S)
KEY Accountability
SUPPORTERS

NEUTRAL MEDIATORS
★ Common definition/understanding of what happened
★ Check-ins with all involved
- self-reflection
- integration of practical resources
- emotional & practical resources

SUPPORTERS (VOICES)

LARGER SUPPORT SYSTEM

SURVIVOR(S)
Healing

SURVIVOR'S NEEDS & WISHES

GOALS

INTERMEDIARY
TEMPORARY

SHORT TERM
• SAFETY
• SURVIVAL
• DEMANDS

step-by-step

SAFETY FIRST !

Resources OUTSIDE of immediate community (legal advocates, anti-violence agencies, etc.)

allies