

## **What is an Affinity Group?**

An Affinity Group (AG) is a small group of 5-15 people who trust each other and share a vision and approach to the sort of activism they do. They come together to participate in a nonviolent campaign or action. An AG might stay together for years or form for one event. AGs help us prepare for, participate in, and support each other in actions. We have each other's backs. In troubled, conflictual times, it is best not to act alone.

AGs, like working groups or committees, are a small part of larger group with a central purpose, and they adhere to a code of nonviolence. The AG structure allows for flexibility of action, and a level of autonomy while cooperating with others in a campaign or mass action. Interconnection of AGs minimizes the likelihood of disruptors, as everyone knows everyone else. Most AGs are non-hierarchical, so there are no "leaders" for authorities to target.

### **Finding or creating an Affinity Group**

Gather together with a small group of trusted people who have similar opinions about the issues in question and the methods of action to be used. Those people may know others to invite. It's important for AG members to be able to meet in person. Linking with other AGs in a campaign through spokes councils attended by a representative of each AG is a helpful communication and planning structure.

AGs develop a shared idea of what is wanted individually and collectively from the action or campaign. They create agreements acceptable for the whole collective on basics: how active, how spiritual, what support each person needs, willingness to risk arrest, political perspectives, action methods, etc.

### **Affinity Group direct actions**

AG actions are varied but they all encompass nonviolent direct action: advocacy and reform work, petitions or legislative approaches, building alternative and new social structures and institutions, drama and music and art, teach-ins, flash mobs, nonviolent media hijacking. Hundreds of action ideas can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Nonviolent direct action training of a half-day to several days is strongly advised for anyone contemplating actions in which arrests or violent conflict are anticipated. The AG carefully plans the action, and decides who will take on the roles needed such as media contact, first aid, legal, and those willing to risk arrest. Support roles are vital to the safety of the participants, ensuring they have food and water, and to monitor the authorities' response.

## **Code of Nonviolence**

1. Our attitude is respectful toward all we encounter in our actions.
2. We use no violence, verbal or physical, toward any person.
3. We do not harm anyone, and we will not retaliate in reaction to violence.
4. We do not carry weapons.
5. We will not be under the influence or bring any non-prescribed drugs or alcohol.
6. We will not bring dogs nor other animals, except for service animals.
7. During a demonstration we will not run nor make threatening motions.
8. In case of any confrontation, we will seek to de-escalate.
9. We affirm that people's lives and safety are more important than property. We focus on creative actions that do not include property destruction.
10. All participants in actions where arrests or violent confrontations are anticipated must receive nonviolent direct action training.