

Transformative Justice and Community Accountability

Transformative Justice and Community Accountability (TJ/CA) are responses to violence which:

- Do not create more harm/violence (e.g. prisons, the police, the criminal legal system) and that do not perpetuate systemic violence (e.g. oppression, harmful societal norms, vigilantism, criminalization).
- Work to meet immediate needs for justice (e.g. safety, healing, connection, accountability); while also working towards a long-term vision of liberation (e.g. a world without prisons and oppression where sexual violence doesn't exist.)
- Work to address current incidences of violence in ways that will shift the conditions that allowed that violence to happen, in ways that prevent future incidences of violence and ultimately end violence.
- Understand that individual acts of harm do not only have individual impact, but also have collective impact and therefore need to be solved collectively.

Through shared principles, values and practices everyday people have been creatively working to respond to violence within their communities. Many of these communities or people either cannot or do not want to call the police because of risk of deportation, police harassment and brutality, further criminalization, fear of exile from their community, etc.

TJ/CA came out of these communities and more recently, just over a decade ago, community groups and organizations began building a shared framework and language around this work. Some of the pivotal groups recognized for their contributions to TJ/CA during this time are INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Critical Resistance, Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), generationFIVE, and Creative Interventions. Since then, more groups have emerged and contributed work and thinking to TJ/CA work, in particular the actual practice of interventions in interpersonal partner abuse and sexual violence.

Many of these groups understood the deep connections between intimate, communal and state violence and did not see using the police, the prison system or the criminal legal system (i.e. state violence) as a viable strategy to address violence in their communities. Many of these groups recognized that these already violent state systems continue a cycle of current and generational violence and trauma and were created to unjustly target, oppress and control their communities, not to protect them. This was a distinct departure from the mainstream domestic violence and sexual assault movements' decision to work directly with the state as their primary strategy to address intimate violence.

TJ/CA work has looked like: accountability circles, safety plans that leverage community resources (e.g. child care, walking people home), study groups of individuals learning about TJ/CA together, creating community safety for youth, collective resiliency, accessible healing, conflict mediation practices, non-violent language and full-on community interventions in violent situations.

TJ/CA provides opportunities for liberatory responses to violence that actively cultivate healing, safety, accountability, connection, transformation and shared humanity and dignity.

Some examples of shared values, principles and practices for TJ/CA work:

Organize collectively	Sustainability
Community-based	Preparation and capacity building
Holistic	Developing a safety strategy
Coordinated	Recognize humanity of everyone involved
Shifting Power	Prepare to be engaged in process long term
Accountability	Centers on those most affected by violence to create change

This document was created by the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC) in 2013 to use in TJ/CA organizing. It is meant to be a short introduction to TJ/CA. All the information collected here is a compilation from many different groups and individuals doing TJ/CA work. We would specifically like to credit this document to the work of groups such as INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), Critical Resistance, Creative Interventions, generationFIVE, Philly Stands Up, the Challenging Male Supremacy Project, and the Atlanta Transformative Justice Collaborative. We hope you will read more about their work and continue to learn about TJ/CA work from them.



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