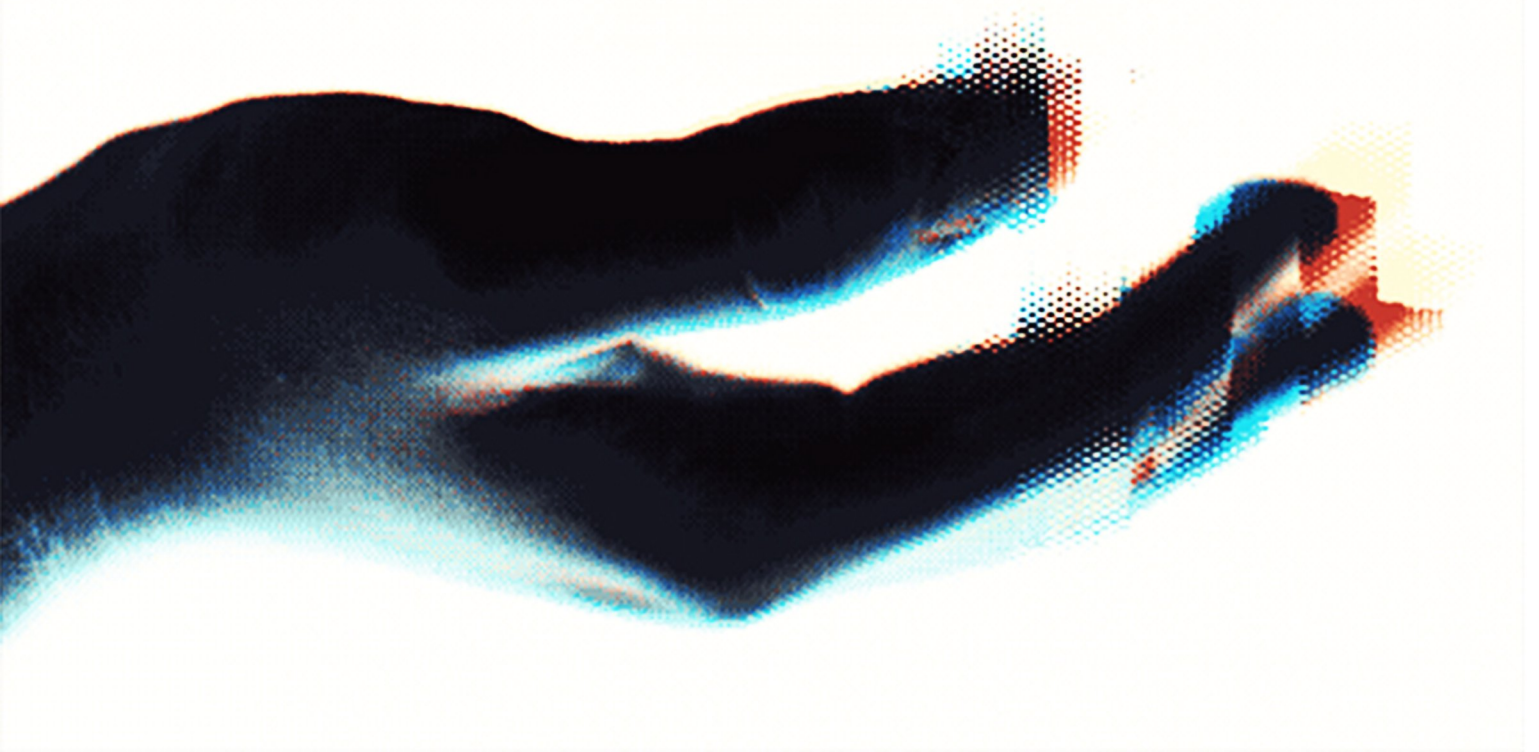


# **ANTI-OPPRESSION TOOLKIT**

## A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



a ulex resource

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Below you will find some tips and tools on how to make courses and trainings easier and more accessible for a wider variety of people. Leading trainings is part of changemaking in the world and we believe that anti-oppression work is an important part of this.

As a facilitator you can do a lot to dismantle existing power structures and challenge oppressive mechanisms embedded in traditional education systems and the way we often relate to one another.

In an ideal situation try to make use of the listed tools/tips where necessary and look out for more!

Although divided into sections, tools from one section can be great to use to address different types of oppression as well, nearly all of them are pretty universal when it comes to diminishing unhelpful power dynamics.

This document is just a set of examples and is not a definitive resource. See the list of resources at the end of the doc to find out more! And also give us feedback on this resource, so that we can improve it: [info@ulexproject.org](mailto:info@ulexproject.org)

This document does not cover issues connected with organising events, merely with delivering a workshop as a trainer. For more info on organising accessible events, see the resources list and the end of this document.



# 1. THE BASICS

Some important things in creating spaces that are inclusive are to:



## EDUCATE YOURSELF

Make sure you have at least a basic knowledge of how gender, race, class, sexuality, neurodiversity, body and mind abilities influence power dynamics and what can be done to work consciously and skillfully with these issues, potentially reducing problems that often arise due to lack of awareness. Read works from feminist and POC (people of colour) authors. Educate yourself on non-heteronormative, transgender and gender beyond binary issues and normative concepts connected with gender and sexuality that most of us are socialised into. Get to know how gender, race, sexuality and class dynamics play out intersectionally in all aspects of social and environmental struggles and why is it important to address them if we want to make change happen.

See resource list at the end of this document to get inspired on what to read. Don't try to make others educate you – take responsibility for yourself. And don't be afraid to acknowledge that you don't know!

## ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR POWER, GET TO KNOW YOUR PRIVILEGES

Check on the privileges you have and acknowledge your power position. It does not mean you need to blame yourself or feel guilty about your identity, your body or your background. It simply means becoming aware of the social credit and position you are given by white supremacist, capitalist and patriarchal society.

Revealing is a first step towards solving! Engage with exploring the privileges you have and how it positions you in different groups. Be transparent and honest about your class background when getting to know others and when starting to work together. Often class is not mentioned, and therefore, class experiences and differences are erased, even though they strongly inform our actions! First, acknowledge your power to yourself and if needed and appropriate you can also acknowledge it to the group/ other people.

## **EMBRACE DISCOMFORT**

Discomfort is often a part of growing and learning experiences. Learn how to sit with your own discomfort and manage it within a group or with individual participants. Don't let scapegoating happen to people causing discomfort. Let your discomfort motivate you to make a change, rather than make you feel guilty. Risk stepping out of your comfort zone!

## **WORK WITH YOUR OWN AND OTHER PEOPLE'S DEFENSIVENESS**

Keep in mind that if you are member of a dominant (mainstream) group you are unlikely to see the oppression(s) as clearly as the members of a non-dominant (marginalised) group can. When someone points out your oppressive attitudes or language to you, your first response should be to believe it (i.e. listen and not become defensive). Think about, reflect on and learn more about the oppression taking place in that particular situation.

## **FAIL**

Acknowledge that if this is a new area for you, you will sometimes get it wrong. Own up to your mistakes and learn from them, treat anti-oppression work as a work in progress. It takes time to unlearn patterns and schemes that are embedded in our culture. And it takes time to learn new tools and ways of relating, that are free from oppressive mechanisms. Be gentle and compassionate with yourself, without losing the sense of responsibility.

## **ADDRESS OPPRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

There might be times during a training when you'll need to address or call someone out on their oppressive behaviour. Don't be afraid of doing this, but take care to do it skilfully. Take into account the safety of the group as a whole and of each participant – from both marginalised and dominant groups. In most cases, people act in oppressive ways out of ignorance or lack of knowledge and not out of ill will. Acknowledge that. It is essential not to ignore oppressive behaviours. Decide, if it is more appropriate and safer to address the issue in the whole group or is it something you need to talk about with someone individually. The most important thing is to see and acknowledge the damage made with oppressive behaviours, it is the first and most important step for rebuilding the safety in the group back again...

...If it's needed, make space on an agenda to address the issue – hold a session on anti-oppression work or specific kind of antagonism or discrimination. A panel discussion or a participant-led session is something you might use in those situations. Be mindful not to put the responsibility of educating others onto those who were marginalised/discriminated.

If a participant approaches you with a need of addressing an oppressive behaviour they experienced, don't ignore it. Listen to their needs in the situation in the first place and act accordingly. Specifically ask if and what they want to be done about it. Don't do anything without consulting with the person affected, as it might cause further damage. It's important that they feel empowered in this situation.

## 2:LANGUAGE

Often, folks on trainings aren't native English speakers. Even if someone's level of English is good, it's still a challenge to function and learn in a language that's not one's first.



### **ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE COURSE IS LED IN ENGLISH**

Simply acknowledging this can take a lot of pressure off folks who are not native English speakers. It also reveals an aspect of the power dynamics that are there, and revealing is a first step towards solving!

### **THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION IS MOSTLY YOURS**

Often facilitators simply ask the participants to flag up whenever they don't understand something and think that language accessibility is then dealt with. This usually isn't enough. Encouraging people to express their needs around language is a good first step, but make sure you acknowledge your responsibility in this situation too. It might be difficult to be interrupted every time someone doesn't understand a word, but also bear in mind it can be difficult to say out loud "*I don't understand*", especially in a new group. There may also be some shame connected to not speaking perfect English. In many non-English speaking countries, knowing English is seen as a sign of education and status. Class and post-colonial dynamics can play out here. Speaking good English and being a facilitator places you in a position of power. Use it for the good of the whole!

## **BE AWARE OF YOUR ACCENT. SPEAK CLEARLY/SLOWLY. AVOID JARGON**

Often the biggest barrier to understanding a native English speaker is their accent. Make sure you speak up, clearly and slowly. Using phrasal verbs or jargon might create a barrier as well. If you use them, make sure you explain what you mean. Not everyone graduated from university, so be mindful of how much academic language you're using.

## **USE PAUSES AND SUPPORT TALKS WITH HANDOUTS, FLIPCHARTS, ETC.**

Listening to a lecture in a foreign language might be challenging, as there is little time for words and meanings to settle, especially when new material is being delivered. Pausing for people to be able to understand the meaning of the words, making notes or asking for a translation can make a big difference. Bringing in some visual aids or a presentation with a list of bullet points makes it easier to understand and digest. Handouts, so that people can re-read the lecture or its key points afterwards, are a great idea as well.

## **LANGUAGE SIGN "L"**

A non-verbal sign for a language issue makes it easier for folks to flag up when they haven't understood. A popular method is suggesting people make an L sign with their thumb and index finger. Propose it as a possibility for people to use and then look out for it whilst you are speaking. If someone uses it, clarify the issue raised and make sure that you've been understood.

## **SILENT TIME / FIRST LANGUAGES**

Having a break from making an effort in a second language can be a relief and can boost involvement, energy levels, and brain capacities. Include exercises or moments of using other types of communication or periods of silence. You might also encourage people to use their own languages when working in groups, pairs or in self-reflective exercises where possible.

## **TIME FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS TO TAKE UP SPACE**

Propose as a general rule, that native speakers actively give space to non-native speakers. It's common that those who feel comfortable with the language will have more ease in speaking up, being first to comment or voice their opinions. Native speakers can take on waiting a couple of minutes before saying something into the group, to give others who are not so fluent a chance to gather their thoughts and their courage to speak up.

# 3:GENDER

Power dynamics connected to gender turn up in all training spaces, as in all parts of society. Patriarchy centres, privileges, and prioritises masculinity and oppresses women (whether cis or trans), nonbinary people and gender non-conforming people, including cis-men who don't conform to patriarchal expectations. As a person holding space for groups, it's important that you try to avoid reproducing these oppressive mechanisms. Take steps to equalise participation, ensure all participants are heard, and diverse gender identities are respected.

## ASKING FOR PRONOUNS/PRONOUN ROUND

Try not to make assumptions about people's gender and identity. You never know before someone tells you, so the simplest way is to ask. Don't be afraid of asking and ideally make a habit out of it! Don't just ask folks whose gender you can't figure out.

If you are doing an intro round, ask people to specify their gender pronoun along with their name and other information you want them to give. Don't make it optional though - either go for the pronoun round or don't! Making it optional will result in only those who fight for their gender to be recognised giving their pronoun and whose gender might not be obvious to others. Don't let it happen - it's stigmatising and puts people on the spot. If participants do not specify their pronouns in the round, remind them to do so as they speak. It's important that everyone takes it seriously.

Sometimes people can say "*It doesn't matter to me*" and that might feel dismissive for others present. If the gender pronoun round creates confusion, as it may in people who've never encountered this tool before, give a short explanation of why you're doing it (i.e. not to make assumptions about people's gender, to be embracing of a non- binary approach to gender etc.). You might also want to encourage people to write their names and pronouns on a sheet of paper and stick it in a visible place for couple days at the beginning, so that it can be memorised by the group.

## **CHECK YOUR OWN AND THE GROUP'S ASSUMPTIONS/PREJUDICES**

Be aware of the assumptions you make about someone. It might be connected with their gender, race or other aspects of their identity, or simply their behavior. As a facilitator also be aware of the assumptions that might be there in the room and challenge them skillfully if appropriate.

## **THREE MATCHES**

The way people take up space in the group will differ. The ease with which different people will speak in the group depends on various factors, but it also might be linked with socially constructed gender norms (or other systems of oppression). To equalise opportunities to voice various points of view, you can try out a 'three matches tool'. It works best with discussions but can be used in other circumstances as well. Each participant receives three matches (you can alter the number of the matches but do not make it too high) and each time they say something in the discussion, they give one match away. One needs to have matches to be able to speak. This tool works both for encouraging people who do not usually take space to do so and it helps everyone to realise how much space do they take up in discussions.

## **ROUNDS**

A round is another tool to help voice the more silent opinions in the room. It might be tiring to use it regularly, especially in big groups, but having a round is sometimes a good tool to shift the dynamics. Ask each person to voice their opinion on some topic, it might either be in a style of passing the voice around the circle, person by person or 'popcorn style', where anyone who wants to speak does so, but people only have one chance to speak. Make stepping out/passing an option for folks who do not want or have anything to say. Sometimes repeating a round if there is time, so that people have second chance to speak can take things deeper.

## 4: RACE | ETHNICITY | CULTURAL BACKGROUND

People coming for the trainings will be of different races and cultural backgrounds. As with gender – it matters. Do not make assumptions based on skin color. Some people might be identifying as people of color (POC), though they pass as white.

### CAUCUS MEETINGS

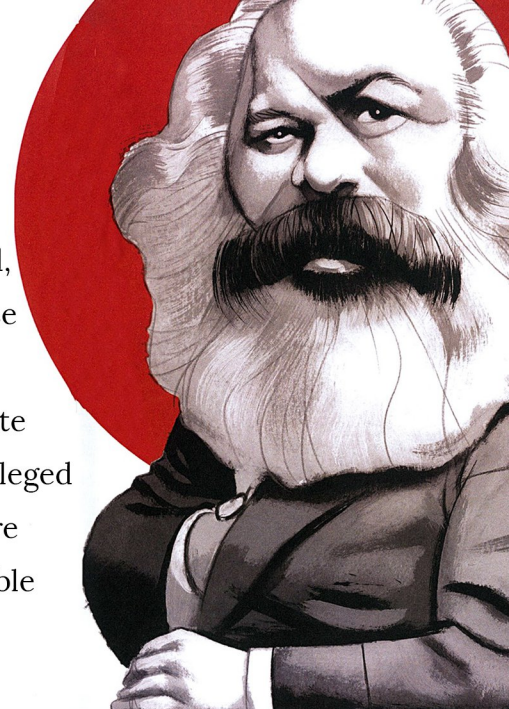
Often the way we deal with power dynamics around different identity issues is by pretending that the differences don't exist. It's much more useful to acknowledge the existence of differences and imbalances to be able to work with them. A good tool to offer people an opportunity to speak with others of similar experience is a caucus gathering. The caucus might come together around a theme: gender, race, ability, class or shared experiences of oppression; for example POC caucus, women and trans caucus, LGBTQ+ caucus, sex workers caucus, etc. It might seem like a tool that divides, but surprisingly enough it often results in creating more of a bond in the group. Often, people have more ease in dealing with challenges and discomfort when in a group of people who share similar experiences of oppression. It might be just for check-in, sharing or also to work on tools, methods and behavior proposals for the whole group around fighting imbalances.

### CREATE SPACE FOR DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE

Don't let one kind of experience dominate the room. Dominating the conversation is an unconscious behavior often resulting from socialisation that teaches white people that their opinions and voice are more valuable than those of people of color. This also comes from and reinforces white culture's norm of individualism. Rather than collaboratively sharing airtime and learning from one another equally, it reinforces hierarchies that don't allow for full participation of some members of the group. If you notice that someone is dominating the discussion, interrupt the person speaking, without shutting them down. You can validate their participation, but at the same time create space for others. (For example saying something like *"Thanks for being willing to take risks and share your thoughts about...I'd like to hear from those who have not spoken yet."*)

## CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Whenever you are proposing an activity, a tool or a method, check if you know where it comes from. Give credit to those who created it, especially if it was not created in the global north by white folks. Often marginalised communities create resources and tools that are being widely used among privileged groups and an automatic assumption is made that they were created by those groups as well. It's important to make visible the marginalised groups labor by acknowledging it.



## 5:CLASS | ECONOMICS | EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Often, even in groups aware of anti-oppression work, class isn't being talked about. It's important to see how our class background influences our behaviors and organising cultures.

## COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Try not to make assumptions about common knowledge or language – if you make references to academic, NGO or other working environments, make sure you explain exactly what you mean. Don't assume people will simply “get it” based on an assumption that we all have a shared understanding.

## USING EXAMPLES

Every time you use an example you have an opportunity to popularise non-normative relationships, situations, lifestyles etc. For example, instead of talking about families (parents, children) perhaps mention community, affinity groups, groups of friends or non-heteronormative families. Try not to reproduce unhelpful stereotypes. When you give an example of conflict, it does not have to be conflict between Maria who is a control freak about cleaning and John who is a local leader. Make examples political; a decision making process can be about a community alcohol policy or the financial impact of food growing within a housing co-op.

## 6: BODY/ABILITY

A workshop culture often assumes that people have able, normative sized bodies. Challenge those assumptions so that we can live and learn in truly diverse communities! Bear in mind that not all kinds of neurodiversity are visible at first.

### CHECKING IN

Make space during the training to accommodate people's needs and make adaptations. You might want to hold a practicalities session every day of the training and ask if there is anything people need from the facilitators or the venue in terms of their comfort and having their needs met. Speak to people before the course about what their specific needs are and how you can best address them and continue to check in with them as the course progresses. Ultimately, it is best to work with people to ensure their needs are addressed and be flexible and adaptable to accommodate them. It's best not to make assumptions.

### SITTING COMFORTABLY

Make sure you offer a range of sitting options for people and don't make these options "special". Simply acknowledge that people have different needs around it - some might be comfortable sitting on a cushion on the floor, some might need a chair, others a mat etc. Make sure there's enough room for people to sit - tight seating might be disturbing for some, as it might mean accidental touching, and is not inclusive of all body sizes. Do not make assumptions around how long people are fine with sitting down; check-in with the group about the session's length and see if people need to stretch/move their bodies at any point.

### TOUCH? CONSENT!

You may want to use some exercises involving touch. That's great, because touch can be very healing and comforting, but not always and not for everyone. Make sure you ask anytime you're about to touch someone and be as specific as possible about it (e.g. Is it ok if I put my hand on your shoulder now?). Offer alternatives that don't involve touch for folks who aren't up for it. Before introducing an exercise that involves touch, explain how it's going to look and give people a chance to decide if they want to get involved.

## **TRANSCRIBE, DEPICT!**

Make sure you're captioning and transcribing audio and video content, offering image descriptions and avoiding flashing animations when doing presentations and using media. For some people it's easier to read descriptions than to look at the pictures. Transcribing makes it possible for folks with visual impairments to have someone read the visual content to them.

## **FONT SIZE**

When creating handouts, keep the font size at 12 at least and consider making larger sized fonts for those who need it. Consider factors such as lighting in the room, time given for reading, and size of writing on flip charts.

## **SPEAK UP**

Agree on signs as a group to indicate for people to speak up (similarly to working with language challenges), so that the responsibility of keeping the space accessible is on the whole group. It can be helpful to find out where it is best for people with a hearing impairment to sit in the room. Be careful about speaking with your back turned or covering your mouth. Providing visual materials additionally to talking (like flip-charts) is helpful as well.

## **THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX**

When planning movement activities, challenge yourself to think outside the box. Go beyond your own experience of your body and think how suitable an exercise would be for someone with a different body to yours. Have you thought of neurodiversity when putting the agenda together? Of different levels of abilities, awareness and engagement people have with their bodies?

# 7: EMOTIONAL WELLBEING | NEURODIVERSITY\*

Folks coming on courses will have different levels of resilience, experience, and will be diverse in terms of their social functioning, learning abilities and emotional literacy. Often the workshop culture reflects the normative approach to emotional and psychological well-being, where everyone is expected to learn and interact with others in the same way.

Often there is an assumption that people taking part in workshops feel at ease with being in big groups, new surroundings and making new friends. There are certain standards around ways of behaving and social interaction. Make an effort to challenge those standards and meet the specific needs of your participants instead, to ensure that everyone feels welcome.

## USING PLAIN LANGUAGE

When speaking and creating handouts try where possible to use simple language and short sentences. If you are using potentially unfamiliar concepts, make sure you explain what they mean. Use examples to illustrate. Make sure you're not using an overly academic language, jargon, etc. When listing things on handouts use bullet points instead of commas and try to write paragraphs of no more than five to seven sentences and sentences of 10-20 words. Do not overuse words like "this," "they," or "it" when it might not be clear what you are referring to. Be mindful of using abstract language like sarcasm and metaphor – some people may have difficulties with understanding it.

## BODY LANGUAGE

Using body language as a tool or a way of communication is great in many ways and often appreciated by folks with hearing impairments. Bear in mind though that people may have different abilities in interpreting your body language – due to neurodiversity, differentiated cultural backgrounds and other factors. Make sure you express yourself both verbally and non-verbally and check if your communication is understandable for everyone.

## **BREAKS**

Some folks might need frequent breaks and a scheduled time off during a residential training to be able to process. Make an agreement with the group about it at the beginning of the course and allow needs in this area to be met where possible.

## **SCHEDULE AND PREDICTABILITY**

Not knowing what to expect in terms of the daily schedule and content might be difficult and disturbing for some participants. Present a clear agenda, course plan and daily schedule as soon as possible on a training. Ideally, send it to the participants before the course starts.

## **SILENT ROOM**

If possible, arrange a space that is designated specifically to silence and rest. A room that can be private and comfortable to sit in for some time would be ideal. Let everyone know that the space is meant to be silent and not for social interaction.

## **CONTENT WARNINGS**

Before using any material that might be triggering, inform the participants about it. Most common triggers are:

- audiovisual materials containing violence
- graphic descriptions of or extensive discussion of abuse and/or self-harming behaviour,
- examples of or content that features hate speech or strong abusive language. Also visual and audio triggers like flashing visuals, loud noises.

## **NAME TAGS**

Useful for everyone and essential for some folks who might have trouble remembering names and pronouns and recognising faces. Ask participants to write their name and preferred pronoun(s) on a piece of paper right at the beginning of the course. People should wear them in a visible place, ideally all the time of the duration of the training.

## QUESTION/FEEDBACK BOX

Having a jar/box/container, where participants can leave written notes to the facilitators is an accessible way of being open to feedback and questions. Some folks might prefer this way of flagging something up, asking a specific question about the content or method used, or asking for support or a need to be met. Place it in a visible place, where everyone can access it. Explain what its purpose is at the beginning of the training and check it regularly.

## BUDDY SYSTEM

Offering tools for the folks to take care of their own emotional and psychological well-being doesn't need to be very demanding and complicated. A "buddy system" is simply arranging the participants in pairs at the beginning of the course, ideally by counting or some other way of randomising, like mingling. If you have a specific reason, arrange the pairings you want (for example by a shared first language). You can use the "buddies" for various purposes – checking in after exercises, for discussions or performing tasks. After they form their pairs, give them some time to get to know each other. You might want to use those open sentences as a getting to know each other exercise:

*"You'll be glad I'm your buddy because. . ."*

*"A way I might need support during this workshop is. . ."*

*"How I might resist that support is. . ."*

*"How you could support me anyway is. . ."*

Explain after forming the buddies that folks will stay in those pairs until the end of the course. Give them opportunities throughout the course to get together with their buddy. You might also suggest for them to check-in with each other after the course finishes.

The buddy system offers the participants the opportunity to have peer-to-peer support and to deepen their learning from the course.

## BASE GROUPS

Similar to the buddy system and can be used alongside it. They offer another opportunity for folks to check-in and take care of each other, as well as being used during exercises. Get the participants in small groups of 3-5 people, making sure again to randomise the selection. Base groups are formed for the duration of the training, people might also choose to check-in with each other after the training finishes. Make sure to offer time during the course for folks to get together in their base groups and check-in, discuss the learning process or the course content. It is advisable to use both base groups and buddies, as for some participants it might work better to share in pairs, and for some in a small group.

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES, PAIR WORK, BIG GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Differentiate the sizes of groups when proposing exercises and discussions. Some people might have difficulties taking space in big groups and some might feel too stretched by being in small groups or pairs all the time.

## 8:LEARNING STYLES

The way people learn can differ a lot. It might be determined by the culture they were raised in, their educational background, their preferences, and their bodies and abilities. Try to differentiate the tools you use, so that as many participants can engage fully with the process and the learning.

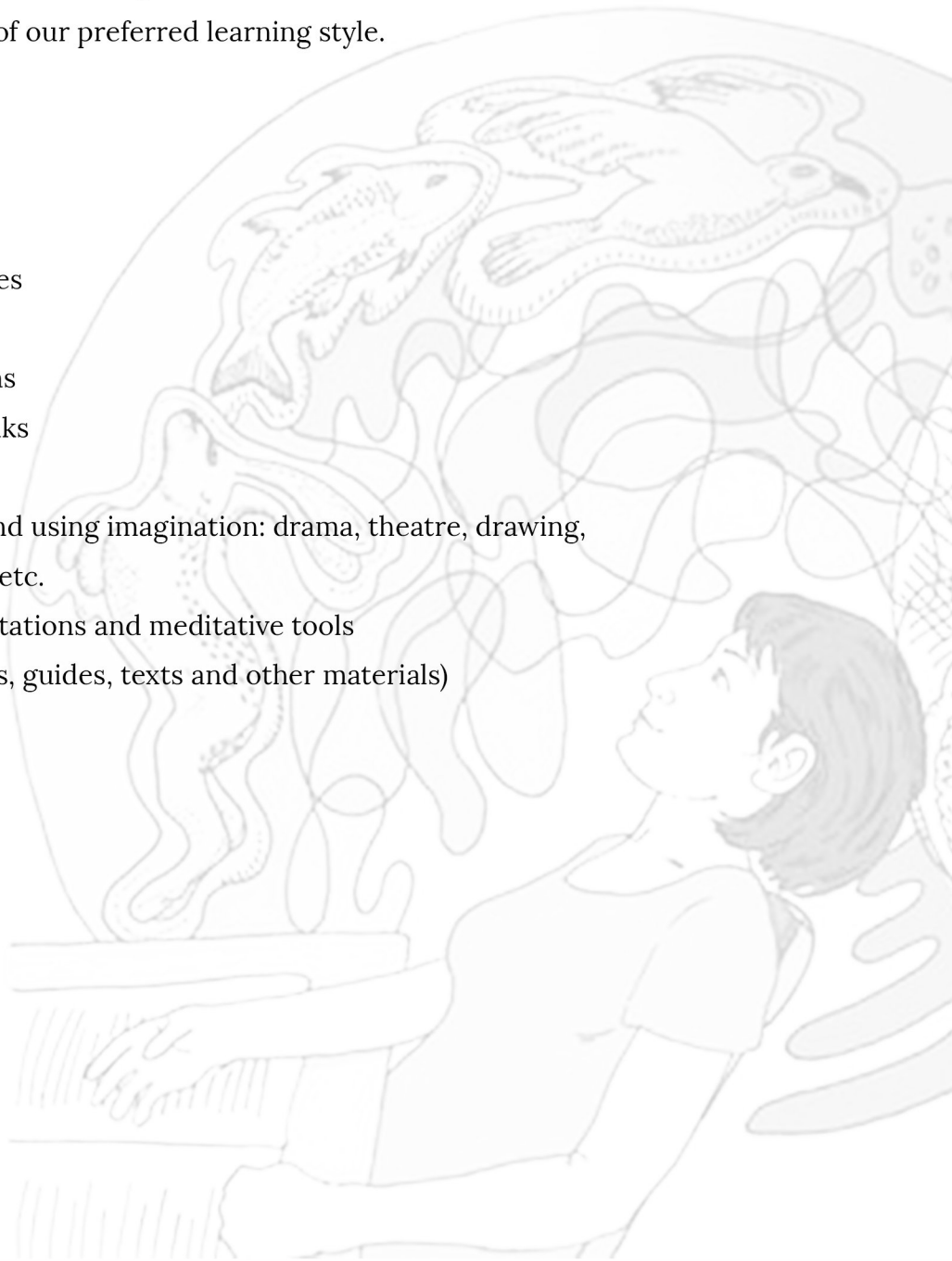


## A TOOLKIT OF TECHNIQUES

Look for different techniques suited to different learning styles. Some people tend to learn through listening, some through doing things, some through discovering and discussing things, some through seeing things presented or listed. And certainly we all benefit from differentiation of the tools, regardless of our preferred learning style.

### Consider using:

- visual materials
- body-based practices
- lectures
- talks and discussions
- energizers and breaks
- nature connection
- creative methods and using imagination: drama, theatre, drawing, poetry, song-writing etc.
- visualizations, meditations and meditative tools
- co-creation (of tools, guides, texts and other materials)



# GLOSSARY

This glossary aims to clarify some of the terms used in the toolkit but can also be a useful resource in itself. Language can be a very powerful tool of oppression and it is crucial that we re-learn and adapt our language so that it does not reproduce violence. A significant part of this glossary was taken from and based on Anti-Violence Project's website:

(<https://www.antiviolenceproject.org/info/glossary/>)

Check it out for more resources and terminology. The (from AVP) mark after the definition means it was taken directly from Anti-Violence Project's website. Another source for the glossary was 'A guide to gender' by Sam Killermann (<http://www.guidetogender.com/>). Some of the definitions are a fusion between both sources and are marked (AVP/SK).

**ABLEISM** – *noun*: A system of superiority and discrimination that provides or denies resources, agency, and dignity based on one's abilities (mental/intellectual, emotional, and/or physical.) Ableism depends on a binary, and benefits able-bodied people at the expense of people with disabilities. Like other forms of oppression, ableism operates on individual, institutional and cultural levels. (from AVP)

**AGEISM** – *noun*: A system of discrimination that provides or denies resources, agency, and dignity based on one's age. First coined to describe the discrimination against old age, seniors and processes of ageing, nowadays used also to describe the prejudice towards children and adolescents.

**ANTI-OPPRESSION** – *noun*: The process of making one's views of the world large enough to include everyone – looking for ways to make connections among different people's struggles and finding ways to think about how issues affect different people in different ways. It doesn't simply mean not accepting 'norms,' 'isms' and oppressive dynamics, but actively working to make the invisible visible, and challenging the systems that hold them in place. Also, an anti-oppression analysis acknowledges that all forms of oppression are linked and that the best way to organise against oppression is to take into account that all oppressions are linked. (from AVP)

**CISGENDER/CIS** – *adj.*: Used to describe people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. We're all assigned to one of the binary sexes – man or women, when born, based on how our genitalia look. Typically, cis men are men who were assigned male at birth and feel that the words “man” and “male” accurately describe their gender. Likewise, cis women are typically women who were assigned female at birth and feel that the words “woman” and “female” accurately describe their gender. The term is used to mark an existing norm, rather than just give names to what does not fit in the societal norms. It is the opposite to the term transgender. “Cis” is a Latin prefix that means “on the same side [as]” or “on this side [of].

**CLASSISM** – *noun*: A hierarchical system that provides or denies resources, agency, and dignity based on one's, or one's perceived, socio-economic class (poor/working class, middle/upper class, upper class, etc.). (from AVP)

**CONSENT** – *noun*: A concept used mostly in the context of sex education, but may be broadened to any kind of physical interaction, touch, crossing personal boundaries (including hugs, different ways of greeting people, etc.). Consent is based on clear communication, understandable for everyone involved in the situation. The purpose of introducing the concept of consent is to enable safe interactions between people, taking into consideration that we all have different communication styles, cultures, needs and experiences around touch and with our own bodies. What is a normalised behaviour is not always comfortable for everyone.

**CULTURAL APPROPRIATION** – *noun*: A particular power dynamic in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systematically oppressed by that dominant group. Different to cultural exchange, when people share mutually with each other because it lacks that systemic power dynamic. It's also not the same as assimilation, when marginalised people adopt elements of the dominant culture in order to survive conditions that make life more of a struggle if they don't.

**EMOTIONAL TRIGGER** – *noun*: any type of stimulus that is witnessed or experienced (e.g., a conversation, a smell, a sound, a person, a space etc.) that elicits an emotional reaction in someone due to its relationship to past or present trauma. (from AVP)

**GENDER EXPRESSION** – *noun*: The external display of one's gender, through a combination of social behaviours, demeanour, dress, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.” As we live in a society that holds and enforces messages about what particular genders are supposed to look like (e.g., men are supposed to look masculine) gender expression is often used (inappropriately and often ineffectively) to determine someone's gender identity. Though these two concepts can be related, one does not necessarily determine or indicate the other. (AVP/SK)

**GENDER IDENTITY** – *noun*: The internal perception of a person's gender, and how they label themselves based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans, agender, questioning and more. Often confused with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth. For some people, gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are separate. (AVP/SK)

**GENDER BINARY** – *noun*: The most common classification system used in our society to categorise sex and gender. The model asserts a binary in that there are two distinct and opposite labels (female/male), qualifiers (vagina/penis), and behavioural expectations (e.g. caretaker/provider, emotional/rational). (from AVP)

**HETERONORMATIVITY** – *noun*: A worldview which frames heterosexuality as the norm, leading to invisibilisation and stigmatisation of other sexualities. This is created through repetitive representations of heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships in our society. An example of heteronormativity is the assumption that people are heterosexual unless they “come out”, an example might be – when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Another example is how non-heterosexual relationships are expected to be similar to traditional “heterosexual” relationships (i.e. labelling one partner as the “man” of the relationship, expecting couples to want marriage/children, etc.). Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight. (AVP/SK)

**HOMOANTAGONISM (HOMOPHOBIA)** – *noun*: Active hostility or opposition (or a range of negative attitudes – e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) towards people whose sexuality is not hetero-normative. Often based on the assumption that monogamous relationships between one man and one woman are the traditional, superior, and only legitimate form of sexuality. The language is shifting from the use of “phobia” to the use of antagonism to better encompass the violence that is perpetrated. This attitude may be experienced inwardly by someone who identifies as queer or gay (internalised homoantagonism). (AVP/SK)

**INTERSECTIONALITY** – *noun*: A concept used to describe the ways in which different kinds of oppression (racism, sexism, homoantagonism, trans-antagonism, ableism, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. For example: two people who have a disability (one intersection) may come from different class backgrounds (another intersection). One person may be working class, while the other comes from the middle class. The way that disability affects their lives would be vastly different because of their relationship with the class system that they come from (access to money, education, resources, therapy, etc.). Inversely, that disability can affect their relationship to class (ability to find work, finding educational institutions that can accommodate their abilities, etc.). Other intersections such as race, gender, citizenship, and many others directly affect these relationships and understandings of oppression. For example, women do not all experience sexism in the same way. Their/our race, class, ability, citizenship status, body type (and many other intersections) affect what it means to experience that identity. (from AVP)

**INTERSEX** – *adj.*: A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that is outside the medical system’s binary classification of ‘female’ or ‘male’. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory. Intersex is a socially constructed category that reflects real biological variation. Physical attributes considered markers of ‘sex’ – e.g., breasts, penises, clitorises, scrotums, labia, testes, and sex chromosomes – all naturally vary, but in the dominant culture sex categories have been simplified into male and female, and people with intersex conditions subjected to shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries or...

**INTERSEX (CONT)** - *adj.*: ...hormonal treatments aimed at making bodies fit into a sex binary. There has been increasing advocacy and awareness brought to this issue, and many individuals advocate that intersex individuals should be allowed to remain intersex past infancy and not treat the condition as an issue or medical emergency. (AVP/SK)

**MISOGYNY** - *noun*: The hatred or dislike of women, girls, or femininity; the denigration of women and characteristics deemed feminine. Misogyny functions as an ideology or belief system that has accompanied patriarchal, or male-dominated societies for thousands of years and continues to place women and people who identify and express themselves in feminine ways in subordinate positions with limited access to power and decision making. Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including sexual discrimination, violence, and the sexual objectification of women. Though commonly associated with men, misogyny also exists in and is practiced by women against other women or even themselves. (from AVP)

**NEURODIVERSITY\*** - *noun*: We purposely avoid using the term 'mental health' as it can be loaded with medical connotations. It is connected to a medical system, which is often oppressive for many folks dealing with emotional and psychological wellbeing issues. Health is also a social construct, embedded in social norms and power structures. By saying this however, we do not want to undermine the important role that psychiatry and health institutions might have in people's treatment and recovery.

**NEURODIVERSITY PARADIGM** - *noun*: A paradigm that indicates that there are culturally created constructs around what is a normal or healthy brain functioning, analogically to the norms created in relation to ethnicity, gender or sexuality. As a result, a system of inequalities is created, which provides agency, dignity and resource access to people appearing as neuro-normative (those in compliance with the created norms on healthy brain functioning). Part of a broader system of ableism, but points out the fact that diverse functioning is not something that is always visible (as it might be in case of diversity in physical abilities).

**NORMATIVE** – *adj.*: In compliance with established societal norms. Might refer to a range of different issues – sexuality, body, gender, etc.

**OPPRESSION** – *noun*: Institutionalised power that is historically formed and perpetuated over time that allows certain ‘groups’ of people to assume a dominant position over ‘other groups’ and this dominance is maintained and continued at an institutional level. This means oppression is built into institutions like government and education systems. It gives power and positions of dominance to some groups of people over other groups of people. Systems of oppression are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies. A norm signifies what is “normal,” acceptable, and desirable. “The norm” is something that is valued and supported in a society. It is also given a position of dominance, privilege, and power over what is defined as non-dominant, abnormal and therefore invaluable or marginal. Norms are also considered to be stable or unchanging over time. (from AVP)

**PATRIARCHY** – *noun*: One of the most influential systems of power in our society that centres, privileges, and prioritises masculinity. Patriarchy is practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society (jobs and positions of power given to men in government, policy, criminal justice, etc.) while also influencing how we interact with one another interpersonally (gender expectations, sexual dynamics, space taking, etc.). As a colonial construct, patriarchy operates powerfully and hierarchically through exercising and enforcing the gender binary and white supremacy. We see this, for example, in the way that white cis masculinity exercises power over not only women, trans folks, and children, but also other forms of masculinity (trans, racialized, poor, disabled, etc.). (from AVP)

**PERSON/PEOPLE OF COLOUR (POC)** – *noun*: An umbrella term primarily used in the USA and Canada to describe any person who identifies as someone from a non-white background. It encompasses all non-white groups and emphasizes the common experiences of systemic racism. It usually covers all/any peoples of African, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Island descent, and it is intended to be inclusive. It should not be used as a synonym to Black and it is important to note when using the term, that not all the communities of colour are affected by racism equally.

**PRIVILEGE** – *noun*: Privilege is an unearned advantage or right that a person is born into or acquires during their lifetime. It is supported by the formal and informal institutions of society and conferred to all members of a dominant group, by virtue of their membership. Privilege implies that wherever there's a system of oppression (such as capitalism, patriarchy, or white supremacy) there is an oppressed group and also a privileged group, who benefit from the oppressions that the system puts in place. Privilege and power are closely related: privilege often gives a person or group power over others. (from AVP)

**QUEER** – *adj.*: Commonly used as an umbrella term by folks who feel that they personally don't fit into dominant norms due to their own gender identity/expression, their sexual practices, their relationship style, their politics, etc. It is a term that has been reclaimed, as it was once considered a derogatory slur towards the gay and lesbian community. Due to this, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQI community. (AVP/SK)

**RACISM** – *noun*: Racism is a white supremacist ideology backed by systemic power, and reinforced through violence. It is a system of power that privileges those people who are defined and socially constructed as white. Racism treats all races as inferior to white people and also subordinates each race to each other. Racism is often understood as an individual state of being, i.e. someone is or isn't racist. However, it's not merely a personal attitude but a racialised system of power maintained by violence. An individual can be perpetuating this system without even being conscious of their actions. (AVP)

**TRANS\*** – *adj.*: An umbrella term referring to people who don't find themselves fitting in the binary gender division system and transgress socially defined gender norms. Might be used instead of the term "transgender". Preferred by some folks, as it is more open and does not have as many medical connotations as "transgender" might have. Not used any more in english speaking contexts (replaced by simply using "trans" without the asterisk), due to the potential it has to erase binary trans people identities. Still in use in Germany and Eastern Europe, where the potential meaning is not so embedded in it due to the different history of feminist and trans\* rights movements. Throughout this toolkit both forms – trans\* and trans – is used to honour different anti-oppression work backgrounds.

**TRANSANTAGONISM (TRANSPHOBIA)** – *noun*: Active hostility, opposition, aggression and/or violence (or a range of negative attitudes - e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) towards trans\* people, the trans community, or gender ambiguity. Transantagonism reflects a hatred of those who do not fit easily into the gender binary. The language is shifting from the use of “phobia” (as in transphobia), to the use of antagonism to better encompass the violence that is perpetrated. May be experienced inwardly by someone who identifies as trans (internalised transantagonism). (AVP/SK)

**TRANSGENDER** – *adj.*: This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. Some transgender people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders. (from AVP)

**WHITE SUPREMACY** – *noun*: The ideology that white people and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions are superior to those of People of Color. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis/Alt-Right, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to white people while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, inhuman and “undeserving.” Drawing from critical race theory, the term “white supremacy” also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level. (from <http://www.dismantlingracism.org>)

# OTHER RESOURCES ON INCLUSIVITY

Dismantling systems of oppression is an ongoing process that we all need to engage with to build a better world. Below are some links to suggested reading, but there are many more resources out there!



## GENERAL

- Training for Change - a training and capacity building organization for activists and organizers - website. Has got a lot of training tools and resources, including loads on anti-oppression:

<https://www.trainingforchange.org/>

- Web resource on becoming an ally - Tools for achieving equity in people and institution: <http://www.becominganally.ca>

- Another dictionary resource on anti-oppression language and terms: <http://www.coloursofresistance.org/definitions-for-the-revolution/>

- Affinity - an intersectional anarchist booklet on topics like patriarchy, privilege, psycho-emotional well-being, violence:

<https://network23.org/blackirispress/files/2013/04/Affinity-read.pdf>

- Integrating Mindfulness into Anti-Oppression Pedagogy. Social Justice in Higher Education, Beth Berila, Routledge 2016

- Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, Bell Hooks, Routledge 1994



## GENDER, FEMINISM

- Everyday Feminism – an intersectional feminist online magazine:  
<https://everydayfeminism.com/>
- An online resource on trans issues: <http://transwhat.org>
- An online resource on men, masculinities and gender politics:  
<http://xyonline.net/>
- The Revolution Starts at Home, Taking risks: implementing grassroots community accountability strategies, written by a collective of women of colour from Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA):  
<https://www.transformativejustice.eu/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Taking-Risks.-CARA.pdf>
- Zine about consent – Let's talk about consent baby:  
<http://www.phillyspissed.net/sites/default/files/lets%20talk%20about%20consent%20baby.pdf>
- Zines written by Meg-John Barker on gender and sexuality:  
<https://www.rewriting-the-rules.com/>
- How to Understand Your Gender: A Practical Guide for Exploring Who You Are, Alex Iantaffi and Meg-John Barker, Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2018
- Online resource on gender identity and sexuality by Sam Killerman, including a PDF version of a book "A guide to gender"  
<http://www.guidetogender.com/>



## **RACE/WHITE SUPREMACY**

- Curriculum for White Americans to Educate Themselves on Race and Racism—from Ferguson to Charleston, by Jon Greenberg, including an extensive reading list aimed at white people wanting to confront white supremacy:

<http://citizenshipandsocialjustice.com/2015/07/10/curriculum-for-white-americans-to-educate-themselves-on-race-and-racism/>

- 15+ Tools and Resources to Challenge Racism, a round up of racial justice resources by CompassPoint:

<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/15-tools-and-resources-challenge-racism>

- Resources on culturally relevant anti-bias work in schools and other organizations. Free for you to download and copy. By Cultures Connecting: <https://www.culturesconnecting.com/resources>

- White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun, changeworkDR:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ApaGvYT5QFGOIowvGwooCOeTEv8eIAy7lwW6QnU-6XU/edit?pli=1>

- RacismNoWay – anti-racism education for Australian schools (offers teaching resources): <http://www.racismnoway.com.au/>

- What's Wrong with Cultural Appropriation? These 9 Answers Reveal Its Harm, by Maisha Z. Johnson on Everyday Feminism:

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/cultural-appropriation-wrong/>

- Mindful of Race. Transforming Racism from the Inside Out, Ruth King: <https://ruthking.net/>



## CLASS

- Showing up for Racial Justice: cross-class capacity tool -

A document was created by the SURJ poor and working-class group to bring white folks into action, dismantle white supremacy and engage with the complex struggle and beauty of collective liberation:

<http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/cross-class-capacity-tool.html>

## NEURODIVERSITY, EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

- The Icarus Project - a support network and education project by and for people who experience the world in ways that are often diagnosed as mental illness. Includes online resources: <http://theicarusproject.net/>

- The Body Is Not An Apology - Radical Self-Love for Everybody and Every Body - an online magazine and resource website:

<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/>