

Transformative Justice in the #MeToo Era: Relevant Definitions

Community Accountability: Definition

“Community accountability (CA) strategies aim at preventing, intervening in, responding to, and healing from violence through strengthening relationships and communities, emphasizing mutual responsibility for addressing the conditions that allow violence to take place, and holding people accountable for violence and harm. This includes a wide range of creative strategies for addressing violence as part of organizing efforts in communities when you can’t or don’t want to access state systems for safety (The Audre Lorde Project, National Gathering on Transformative and Community Accountability, 9/2010).”

Community accountability is a process in which a community – a group of friends, a family, a church, a workplace, an apartment complex, a neighborhood, etc – work together to do the following things: (Incite! Women of Color and Trans People of Color Against Violence (2012):

- Commit to ongoing development of all members of the community, and the community itself, to **transform the political conditions** that reinforce oppression and violence
- Provide **safety & support** to community members who are violently targeted that **respects their self-determination**
- Create and affirm **values & practices** that resist abuse and oppression and encourage safety, support, and accountability
- Develop sustainable strategies to **address community members' abusive behavior**, creating a process for them to account for their actions and transform their behavior

Transformative Justice: Definition

- Transformative justice includes the belief that systems can and do cause harm in our lives (including state systems and social services). As a result, Transformative Justice works to create solutions outside the system—(i.e. campaigns without policy change) (From YWEP)
- Transformative justice can be broadly defined as a community-based movement of ending violence without reliance on the prison industrial complex (PIC), the state, or harmful institutions. (From Whose Streets Toolkit)
- Transformative justice [is] a liberatory approach to violence...[which] seeks safety and accountability without relying on alienation, punishment, or state or systemic violence, including incarceration or policing. Transformative Justice seeks to provide people who experience violence with immediate safety and long-term healing and reparations while holding people who commit violence accountable within and by their communities. This accountability includes stopping immediate abuse, making a commitment to not engage in future abuse, and offering reparations for past abuse. Such accountability requires on-going support and transformative healing for people who sexually abuse.” (From Generation Five)

Transformative Justice has three core beliefs: (“Toward Transformative Justice by Generation Five”)

- Individual justice and collective liberation are equally important, mutually supportive, and fundamentally intertwined—the achievement of one is impossible without the achievement of the other.
- The conditions that allow violence to occur must be transformed in order to achieve justice in individual instances of violence. Therefore, Transformative Justice is both a liberating politic and an approach for securing justice.
- State and systemic responses to violence, including the criminal legal system and child welfare agencies, not only fail to advance individual and collective justice but also condone and perpetuate cycles of violence.

Harm Reduction: Definition (taken from the Whose Security Tool Kit and Young Women’s Empowerment Project)

- Harm reduction is a philosophy of living, surviving and resisting oppression and violence that centers self-determination and non-condemning access to an array of options.
- This framework intentionally, holistically and creatively supports people exactly where they are, without pre-conceived expectations of success while recognizing the impact of violence on our lives and communities.

We value harm reduction practices that

- AFFIRM the expertise, self-determination, and experiences of young people.
- DEEPEN our understandings of the ways in which individuals and communities experience risks, oppression, and violence—and the evolving ways we resist.
- CREATE accountability through intentional and youth-led relationship building.
- PROVIDE an array of options so that individuals can make informed decisions, guide their own healing process, and practice/teach harm reduction in their own lives and communities.

Healing Justice: Definition (Taken from Young Women’s Empowerment Project and the Chicago Healing Justice Learning Circle)

- Healing Justice means we all deserve to heal on our terms and we confront oppressive systems that get in our way. We honor the trauma and resilience of generations that came before us and use interactive, daily practices that anyone can do.
- Healing Justice is a reminder to social movements that the concept of action should be expanded to support the self-determination, interdependence, resilience & resistance of those most impacted by oppression.
- Healing Justice is revolutionary in confronting the capitalist, colonial, individualistic paradigms that tell us we are alone when we seek out healing.