

# **I. Getting started**

# **A. Introduction to Sex Workers Outreach Project USA**

## **About SWOP-USA:**

Sex Workers Outreach Project USA is fast becoming one of the largest national grassroots coalitions working solely to protect the rights of sex workers and those who work in the sex industry. Our mission is to improve the lives of sex industry workers by promoting safety, dignity and diversity in sex work. SWOP promotes an environment that affirms individual choices and occupational rights. We provide legal and financial training, health and safety information, media support for court cases, activist training to organizers, and advice on law enforcement problems. We work with local, state and national legislators on issues surrounding sex workers rights. Our successful media and educational campaigns have empowered sex workers to organize and raised community awareness about sex workers rights.

SWOP's stand on federal interference with prostitution state laws is one of zero-tolerance. SWOP invests in traditional, battle-tested tactics such as legislative organizing, community outreach, petition drives, etc., and supports the use of non-violent direct action as means of escalating tactics to reach campaign goals.

## **SWOP's Beliefs & Values:**

The following are the beliefs and values that guide our work at SWOP.

- Prostitution is work and should be recognized as such to protect the workers.
- Government should decriminalize prostitution.
- Current federal and state policies on prostitution are hypocritical, immoral and a violation of basic human rights
- Everyone should have the right to have sex for money or any other consideration.

## **SWOP's Goals:**

There is a variety of work to be done on the issue of sex workers rights. SWOP's campaigns and programs all work to meet the following goals.

- Decriminalize prostitution at a state level and fight new legislation at the federal level.
- End arrests and prosecutions of prostitutes on the state and federal level.
- Educate sex workers and advocates on the laws and their rights under the law.
- Empower sex workers to speak out for themselves without fear of arrest or humiliation.

## **SWOP's Campaign strategies:**

In order to win, we must work on all levels, from local to national, gaining immediate victories while working towards long-term goals. The SWOP campaign:

- Participates in a national emergency response network of activists to respond to federal legislation against prostitution.
- Plans international, national and local events to raise awareness of violence, stigma and discrimination in the sex industry.
- Pressures local, state and federal government agencies to repeal prostitution laws through administrative lobbying, grassroots pressure, and legal avenues. Reframes prostitution as a health and safety issue, and gains the active support of health professionals, politicians, theologians and many others from the community at large.
- Pushes for and then supports state resolutions protecting sex workers rights.

- Empowers sex workers to come together locally, nationally and globally to network and organize for their human rights.
- Organizes locally to gain supporters and to enact laws that protect and promote safety for sex workers.
- Gives advocates in areas without a strong sex worker movement the benefit of experience of campaign strategies and community networking.

## What you can do immediately:

- Become a SWOP member.
- Sign up for the SWOP list.
- Check SWOP's website to find out if there is a SWOP chapter or affiliate near you.
- Go to SWOP's website and print out all relevant organizing materials you may need: ([www.swop-usa.org](http://www.swop-usa.org)).
- Call a meeting of sex workers, activists, and all others concerned with sex workers rights.
- Collect emails and addresses, keep a copy of the list you build for your group, and send another copy to Robyn at SWOP. ([robyn@swop-usa.org](mailto:robyn@swop-usa.org)).

## B. Working with SWOP

SWOP's campaigns are inclusive and may be carried out by local SWOP groups, local chapters of other like-minded organizations or motivated individuals.

**SWOP Chapters** - If there's not already a local group working specifically on sex workers rights, we encourage you to start a SWOP chapter. Starting a new group can be a fun and challenging exercise. SWOP chapters have the unique position of being connected to a international sex worker campaign, while also maintaining the ability to work on local sex worker rights issues.

**SWOP Affiliates** - If you are already part of another like-minded group (COYOTE, Bayswan, PONY, Desiree Alliance, etc.), you are welcome and encouraged to work on SWOP's campaigns and serve as an SWOP affiliate for your area. We will call on you to help with national actions and lobbying, and you can still do the other work your group does at regular meetings.

**Groups Working on SWOP Campaigns** - If you are a part of a group that is not a SWOP affiliate, your group can still work on international, national and local SWOP campaigns. Some of the campaigns you can take part in include:

- Decriminalization of prostitution
- Emergency court support
- State campaigns for prostitution law reform
- Organize and produce events that create awareness about sex worker rights issues.

**Individual SWOP Activists** - If you are not part of a larger group, there are still several ways to plug into the SWOP campaign. Some ways to get involved include:

- Plan an educational event to educate sex workers and local community regarding sex workers rights.
- Circulate SWOP information and materials in your local community
- Join your local sex workers rights chapter or start your own.

## Benefits of Working with SWOP

- Start-up toolkits including an organizing handbook, media manual, citizen lobbying handbook, decriminalization fact sheets, and a sampling of SWOP literature.

- Consultation from SWOP volunteers and staff on local, national and international campaigns.
- Trainings lead by SWOP volunteers on topics including lobbying, media, action planning, civil disobedience, and strategy.
- Networking opportunities with other SWOP chapters and affiliates.
- Space on the SWOP national website to post local activities, meetings and information.

## SWOP Chapter Requirements

If you choose to use the SWOP name, we ask you to affirm that you agree with the basic demands, analysis, and strategies of our campaign described in this handbook. We are committed to building a grassroots resistance to the war on sex workers, and in order to do that we need basic unity and a solid communication system. To become an SWOP chapter your group must:

1. Include at least ten annual paying SWOP members. (Annual membership costs \$35 or \$15 for students or low-income.)
2. At minimum, having a name, number and email address up on our website and be willing to act as a networking hub with local activists working on sex worker rights.
3. Spearhead local organizing for national and international days of action.
4. Help identify constituents for meetings with elected officials.
5. Communicate back to the national SWOP office about local issues, as well as send out our action alerts to appropriate local lists.
6. Obtain and send copies of signatories for the SWOP-USA database, including any current petitions.
7. Initiate an ongoing group that meets regularly and does the political action side of sex workers rights issues.
8. Share e-mail and mailing lists with SWOP-USA for alerts and updates

Besides these simple requirements, SWOP chapters are independent in terms of campaign activities. If you live in a state that doesn't recognize sex workers rights or will even discuss them, providing an educational forum or getting a referendum passed may be your organizing priority. If you live in a state that does, maybe getting local police chiefs and city councils to make a statement supporting ending violence against sex workers would be your priority. In either case, we ask you to be involved in a response plan to defend sex workers rights.

## SWOP chapters are NOT:

- One person (although it just takes one person to get it going!)
- Groups that provide sex for hire
- Groups that disparage diversity
- Completely autonomous from national

## Affiliate Requirements

As an SWOP Affiliate, we ask you to affirm that you agree with the basic demands, analysis, and strategies of our campaign described in the handbook. We are committed to building a grassroots resistance to the war on sex workers, and in order to do that we need basic unity and a solid communication system. To become an SWOP affiliate your group must:

1. Pledge to sign up at least five annual paying SWOP members. (Annual membership costs \$35 or \$15 for students or low-income.)
2. At minimum, having a name, number and email address up on our website and be willing to act as a networking hub with local activists working on sex workers rights politics.
3. Spearhead local organizing for national and international days of action.

4. Help identify constituents for meetings with elected officials.
5. Communicate back to the national SWOP office about what's going on locally, as well as send on our action alerts to whatever local lists are appropriate.
6. Obtain and send copies of signatories for the database and any current petitions.
7. Cover the SWOP agenda at least one meeting per month. This may be done in conjunction with your own organizational meetings

Besides these simple requirements, SWOP affiliates are independent in terms of localized campaign activities. If you live in a state that doesn't recognize sex workers rights, creating an educational forum or getting a referendum passed may be your organizing priority. If you live in a state that does, maybe getting local police chiefs and city councils to make a statement supporting ending violence against sex workers would be your priority. In either case, we ask you to be involved in the response plan to defend sex workers rights nationally and internationally.

## **II. Building a Chapter**

## A. Planning and Executing Your First Meetings

Talk to your friends and other like-minded individuals. Even if you begin with only 2 or 3 people, don't be discouraged. Pick a meeting spot and begin advertising your meeting at least two weeks before it actually occurs. Hang flyers in targeted areas, call local papers and radio stations to get listed in their events calendars, and don't forget to tell SWOP so we can publicize your meeting on our email lists. You can't do too much outreach.

### Sample First Meeting Agenda

1. **Pick a facilitator and a note taker**
2. **Read and agree on ground rules**
3. **Approve agenda and timeline**
4. **Introductions**
5. **SWOP's mission statement and goals**
6. **Review SWOP's campaigns**
7. **Upcoming actions or events**
8. **Breakdown of steps and tasks**
9. **Decide how the group will stay in touch**
10. **Pick the next meeting time**
11. **Find volunteer to type meeting notes**

### Successful Meeting Tip #1

Before the meeting, plan a solid agenda, set out refreshments, learn people's names as they arrive, and introduce them to each other. Set out literature and a sign-in sheet.

## SAMPLE AGENDA

**\*\*It is most important to do two things during this first meeting: collect contact information and set the next meeting time and place.\*\***

1. Pick a facilitator or two and a note taker. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to keep the meeting moving along on time, that the meeting sticks to the agenda, and that everyone who wants to speak gets an opportunity. It is important the facilitator not "police" the meeting but guides it.
2. Read meeting ground rules and get a consensus from the group that they will be respected. The group may decide to add rules as well. It will be up to the facilitator to gently remind people of the ground rules if they are broken to keep the meeting running smoothly.

### Successful Meeting Tip #2

Before the meeting post the following meeting ground rules where people can see them:

1. Do not interrupt
2. Raise your hand to speak
3. Assume best intentions
4. Do not repeat others
5. Be respectful when disagreeing

3. Introduce the agenda, and ask for any additions. It is a good rule of thumb to have "announcements" as the last agenda item. This gives members the opportunity to talk about other items without filling up meeting time to do so. Then go through each item and give a rough estimate of how long you want to spend on each item. It will then be the facilitator's duty to remind the group if they are going over time. If an item is taking more time than allotted the facilitator should ask the group if they want to agree to add more time to the item or move on.
4. Do a go-around of introductions, including name, affiliation, and interest in the issue (be sure to specify that each intro should be limited to 2 minutes or this could take up your entire meeting). Pass around a sign-up sheet and collect numbers, email addresses, etc.

### Successful Meeting Tip #3

During the meeting sit in a circle and begin by stating why you wanted to start a SWOP group, and what the SWOP campaign is currently working on. Then go in a circle and ask each person to say why he or she is interested, and what they think they'd like to do. Try to make everyone feel like they are being listened to and that their ideas are being considered.

5. Read SWOP's mission and goals to the group to make sure that everyone is on the same page from day one!
6. Review SWOP's campaigns, how they apply to your group and what other challenges your community faces. Check with SWOP's staff before your meeting to get a list of most recent campaigns. Pass around "Global Statement Pledge" cards & collect-signed ones later in the meeting to send to the SWOP office.
7. Review upcoming events and actions that SWOP national is planning and local events such as city council meetings, court hearings, etc.
8. Brainstorm a list of tasks and steps that you need to accomplish for the items discussed in item #7 and get volunteers to take on items. Some examples of such tasks might be:
  - o **Media:** do you need a press release? Do you need media talking points for participants?
  - o **Outreach:** Contacting other like minded groups to join you in your efforts, making flyers to ensure greater turn out, etc.
  - o **Art and visuals:** Do you need signs, banners, t-shirts, or other visuals for the event?
  - o **Materials:** Do you need something to hand out at the event to educate target audience?
9. Is everyone on e-mail? Do you need a list-serve to stay in touch? Should you have a phone tree?
10. Dispatch: Review who is going to do each thing, including send out the notes and a list of contacts, and pass the hat for costs. Don't forget to set the next meeting date and place! Close your meeting and thank the facilitators and participants.
11. Announcements: This is a time to allow those who want to share items that maybe outside the realm of the agenda
12. Socialize afterwards!

## Beyond the First Meeting

Before your second meeting you should phone everyone in the group to remind them of the next meeting and try to get people to personally commit to attending. At the second meeting, decide on some action items to get started. You may want to host a benefit or other type of event to get your feet wet. This also empowers your membership to go on to bigger things. Look through the campaign strategy and the event options in this booklet and discuss them with your group; settle on one, develop an action plan, and follow through on it.

### Successful Meeting Tip #6

Take notes and distribute to everyone soon afterwards. Start an email list serve to facilitate future organizing.

If your group is working well together a good way to keep people committed and engaged it may be a good idea to create committees or working groups to tackle major items. You can have breakouts at these meetings for these groups to meet and report back to the main group. Some examples of working groups you may choose include:

- **Media** working group
- **Outreach** working group: everyone should do this, but a group can schedule tabling and leafleting opportunities. Setting up a table is a great way to get free into events!
- **Art in action** working group: People who can put the time into making props, puppets, planning street theatre, music, etc.
- **Alliance-building** working group: Unlike outreach, this involves going to other existing groups, offering our support, and soliciting theirs. These are the ambassadors - a very important and often-neglected role.
- **Fundraising** working group: Planning fun events that can support your work.
- **Education** working group: May plan forums, curriculum, develop leaflets, etc.

### Successful Meeting Tip #7

Pass the hat at meetings to cover minor copying costs and materials for actions. Small donations can go a long way!

The working groups depend on the interests and abilities of your membership. Make sure one person is the primary contact for each workgroup and that person's contact info is included in the notes and available to all chapter members and the national office.

Remember to network with the national SWOP office so we know what local groups have formed and can facilitate communication between groups. Please make copies of your participant lists and send them to us so that we can add the names to our national list. Copy the "Global Statement" and collect signatures, and also send copies of that to the national office.

## B. Chapter Structure

### Using Roving Facilitators

There are several ways to share leadership within a group, but one effective method is using roving facilitators. At each meeting, two people should volunteer or be chosen to facilitate the next meeting. (It's often fun working with others as facilitators, and in case one person cannot make it to the following meeting, the other will be there to facilitate.) These people will be responsible for:

- Helping to promote the meeting.
- Creating an agenda for the meeting.
- Moderating the meeting to ensure it runs smoothly.

The facilitators should rotate in order to give several people the chance to be involved. Encourage new activists to co-facilitate with someone who's been involved for a long time. Challenge facilitators to come up with creative activities or presentations for the meetings. Have fun with this!

### Setting Meeting Rules

At the beginning of each SWOP meeting, the facilitators should set ground rules for the meetings. Here are some basic rules that help meetings run smoothly:

- Do not interrupt others while they speak.
- Raise your hand to speak.
- Assume best intentions.
- Be respectful when disagreeing.
- Do not repeat others

In addition to these rules, facilitators should ask the rest of the group to provide ground rules for the meeting.

## Monthly Agenda Outline

This rough outline should be used every month. While we ask that SWOP chapters and affiliates cover certain issues monthly, there is a lot of room for local input and creativity.

- a. Introductions.
- b. Present the agenda and ground rules, and ask for additions.
- c. Give a national update (this will be provided to you monthly through an email from the SWOP office).
- d. Discuss local sex worker rights issues.
- e. Prepare for an upcoming event or action, or do a political activity, like writing to an elected representative about a pending bill (find ideas in the Organizing Skills section of this handbook).
- f. Pick two facilitators and set a time, date and place for the next meeting.
- g. Socialize!

## C. Outreach and Recruitment

Outreach is one of the most important aspects of organizing so don't let it fall through the cracks. While one or two committed people can be effective, building your group will develop further strengths and ensure longevity. Below, we will review several methods of outreach.

### Using email lists for outreach and organizing

We will be reviewing the different ways you can set up and use email lists to communicate with your members, supporters, volunteers, and the media.

**Using your regular email software** The simplest way to create and use email lists is to use your regular email software. This is a good choice for individual activists and for organizations in which the staff has little technical expertise and if your list has only a couple hundred subscribers.

For example, if you want to send out press releases, set up a personalized address book labeled "Media" that includes the email addresses of all the interested reporters you know. To send a press release to your "Media" list, put your own email address in the "To" field, and type "Media" in the "Bcc" field of the message header. That way, all of the reporters will receive the message, but only your email address will be disclosed. ALWAYS use the "Bcc" (blind carbon copy) field if you are creating an email list in your address book so that the email addresses are hidden to your recipients.

**Activist E-mail Account and List Providers** There are organizations that offer free mailing lists to activists like [Rise Up](#) and [TAO](#). These organizations are far more trustworthy and sympathetic to activists than capitalist E-mail services but they have limited resources.

#### Types of email lists

**Announcement-only email lists:** This configuration provides one-way communication from the list owner to the list subscribers. This configuration is good for distributing electronic newsletters, action alerts, etc. When you configure a list for announcements only, you need a password in order to post messages, so you can determine who can post messages to the list.

**Moderated email lists:** A moderated email list allows for controlled two-way communication. Any subscriber can post a message to the list, but the list owner decides whether or not to post it. This gives the list owner nearly as much control over the content as the owner of an announcement-only list. The main disadvantage is that you'll have to read every reply you get from list subscribers in order to decide whether or not to post them.

Un-moderated email lists: In an un-moderated list any subscriber can post a message to the list for everyone to see. This configuration gives subscribers the most freedom to communicate and requires very low maintenance, but it also gives the list owner the least amount of control over the content.

Open subscription process (anyone can participate): An open subscription list allows anyone who is interested to subscribe without approval from the list owner.

Membership-only lists (subscription approval, password-protected Web sites): When you set up a list to require subscription approval, all subscription requests are forwarded to the list owner who will choose whether or not to approve them.

[Excerpted from "The Virtual Activist" with modifications by Shawn Ewald]

## Guidelines for Tabling

**Why Table?** Setting up a literature & merchandise table provides outreach opportunities for your group, provides activity for members looking for something to do, and makes money. All of these benefits are essential for building your group, and keeping it strong.

**Where to set up a table** - All of the following events and locations are useful and beneficial to some degree. They are listed in decreasing order of likely success: A. Big political events, demonstrations, and marches; B. Events of your own; C. Small events; D. Specific locations in your community. It is best to start with no more than one event or tabling effort per month and builds up your momentum.

**Supplies you will need** - In order to successfully table and accommodate your volunteers, you should obtain the following (lightweight, durable materials are the best)

- Portable Tables (if none are available, a tarp laid out on flat ground will work)
- Folding Chairs
- Milk Crates (for transport; can double as chairs)
- Rubber Bands (wind is always a nuisance)
- A Cash Box and \$20 in Small Bills for change (round your prices off to the dollar; it's much easier) The cash box should also contain pens, pencils, tape, scratch paper, etc. As the day goes on, if you are accumulating a considerable amount of money in the cash box, take out all cash except what you need to make change and put it in a safe place. Keep careful records of financial transactions while tabling - with separate columns for donations, memberships, sales, and sales tax, separately.
- Clip Boards (for pledges of resistance and contact sheets)
- Literature Racks (not essential, but highly useful, especially if space is limited)
- Tarps and Rope (in wet climates)
- A durable hand truck with straps for transport is essential.

**Presentation** - Be sure that the name of your group appears on a sign or banner prominently displayed and visible



from a distance. Make the table display as attractive as possible. A tablecloth perhaps, a variety of colorful books, shirts, eye-catching signs, posters, etc., will draw people over. Straighten literature periodically. For outdoor events, have with you a plastic sheet of some kind for a quick cover if it rains, and a bunch of clean rocks (or rubber bands) you can use to keep pamphlets from blowing away. Take an up-to-date price list of all merchandise. All items should be marked with the price, whenever possible.

**Outreach** - The most important reason to table is to outreach and ORGANIZE! As people approach the table, stand up and engage them in friendly conversation. Talk about the issues, and let them know how they



can help organize or participate. Have cards with your next meeting date and location available. Always provide a sign-up sheet that offers further contact.

[Excerpted from "[Guidelines for Tabling](#)" & from Steve Ongerth, East Bay IWW with modifications by Shawn Ewald]

## Public Petitioning



**A great way to do public outreach is through petition gathering. Petitioning is a simple and effective alternative to tabling, especially for individuals or small groups. Here are some quick tips for successful petitioning:**

- Choose a high traffic area to petition such as concerts, political events, college campuses or busy areas in your community.
- Print out several copies of a petition. You can use a petition found on the SWOP website or one of your own.
- Rubber-band the petitions to pieces of cardboard. These hand-made clipboards are often easier to handle than store-bought clipboards.
- Make sure to have several extra pens on hand in case a pen is lost or runs out of ink.
- Greet people with a catchy line.
- Be friendly and outgoing.
- Have fun!



## Approaching Other Groups

Doing outreach to like-minded groups is essential to getting a new group off the ground or to expanding an existing group. When approaching other groups, always think about how you would like to be approached. Do research into their beliefs, goals and campaigns and try to see how your group's work fits into those. Attend one of their meetings and introduce yourself. Ask if they would be willing to co-sponsor an event. For ideas on groups to approach, refer to the allied and potential allied organization list in the Resources section of this handbook.

## Media Outreach

Think about utilizing local media not just as a tool for public education but also for a outreach about your specific group. Write letters to the editor in response to sex worker media, and make sure to affiliate yourself with your group. Ask friendly journalists to write about your group before a meeting or event to publicize the event beyond your circle of activists. Send out press releases about your group's activities to get the community excited about what you are doing.

For further ideas, please refer to the [SWOP Media Manual](#) or [Media Resources for Grassroots Organizers](#).

## D. Volunteer Development

Chapter members and volunteers are the life-blood of SWOP. It is important to remember that people come to SWOP at different levels, and each type of member may have different needs. For example, new members can often feel overwhelmed and lost at meetings, while veteran members may feel bored or disconnected. Here are some tips on how to develop and retain effective volunteers:

## Cultivating New Members

- **Always begin meetings with introductions.** Introduce the campaign and have a go-around for chapter introductions.
- **Create an open environment geared towards education.** Encourage questions and offer explanations.
- **Give new members responsibility.** People often will not continue activity with an organization unless they feel they are needed. Ask members to prepare a news summary for a meeting, create flyers, do phone banking, etc.
- **Call new members to invite them to the next meeting.** Since they have not yet made SWOP part of their routine, they may forget.

## Keeping Members Interested

- **Focus meetings on action.** While meetings can be educational and fun, always plan or execute some type of action. This will help members feel that they are involved in a campaign and not just hanging out with like-minded individuals.

### Community Awards

A great way to recognize members publicly is to give out awards. Give awards to outstanding volunteers, accomplished leaders, etc. Name awards after past leaders or give awards creative names.

- **Ask for input from all members.** A few vocal individuals can easily dominate a meeting. Make sure that all members know that their input is welcome and needed. Designate a facilitator to ensure that nobody dominates and that all voices are heard.
- **Recognize members for their efforts, publicly and privately.** While you know how talented and committed your members are, they need to hear this. Give credit when someone has excelled on a project or committed energy towards SWOP.
- **Encourage members to socialize.** People come to activist organizations for the politics, but they stay because it's fun. Host social events after meetings or on the weekends. Go to movies or sporting events. Be creative and have fun!

## Developing Leaders

- **Find out about members' skills, interests, and connections.** You will never know until you ask. Someone might have media experience. Another member could like to talk on the phone. Maybe a member has a connection to a local politician. Find out and make use of these skills.
- **Create distinct positions and responsibilities.** This will help foster accountability. Some ideas are coordinators for media, fundraising, event planning, and recruitment.

### **III. Organizing Skills**

## A. Event planning

A good event will do some or all of the following: project your group's political power, strengthen your group's cohesiveness, promote activism, gain new members, raise consciousness, and raise money.

### Whore College:

Host a teach-in with classes on legal and financial issues, health and safety issues and political issues. Utilize healthcare professionals, lawyers and professors to teach these classes. Give out certificates to those who "graduate".

**Teach-ins** can be held virtually anywhere and rely mostly on local talent. A teach-in has two parts: a learning or information sharing section and an interactive section to put the information into action (e.g., letter writing or planning future actions). An interesting and fun agenda will draw a larger audience.



**Panel discussions** involve the public in your event. Experts on your issue each give a very brief presentation, and then answer questions from the audience. A successful panel discussion takes a lot of planning, but tends to draw new people to an issue.

**Debates** are similar to panel discussions except that they present opposing sides of a single issue. Opponents can be drawn from law enforcement, academia, politics, or feminists. Be sure your side is both qualified and prepared on the issue. Practice role-playing the debates. Don't be afraid to play the moral high card; behind those statistics are jailed sex workers, first time non-violent offenders, broken families, and other collateral damage.

**Rallies** can be as complicated or as simple as you plan them to be. From simple informational pickets to large public gatherings, rallies can energize an organization. Press coverage is essential - therefore, the rally must have a "hook", an event it has either created or is responding to that makes it "news". A protest rally after a sex worker arrest or against a federal government sting operation on massage parlors are examples of a 'crisis' demanding response.



## General Tips for Successful Events . . .

- Think of ways to reach out to other like-minded groups. Have a sex worker or academic advocate speak, and ask another sex worker organization to co-sponsor. Focus on prostitution arrests and draw the interest of criminal justice groups.
- Always include a political action in your event, even if it is primarily a social or educational event. Pass around petitions. Generate letters to the editor.
- Promote. Promote. Promote. A common mistake is to spend so much time planning an excellent event and leaving little time to spread the word. A well-planned event is only successful if people show up. Try to spend as much energy promoting an event as you do on planning it.

## B. Tips on public speaking

Giving speeches and presentations is one of the most basic ways that an activist can communicate ideas. Every activist should have at least a little experience with public speaking.

### Speaking Tips

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But, too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here's how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations:

1. **Know the room.** Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and try practicing using the microphone and any visual aids.
2. **Know the audience.** Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
3. **Know your material.** If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.
4. **Relax.** Ease tension by going for a walk, doing some basic stretching, chatting with colleagues.
5. **Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, and informative. They don't want you to fail.
6. **Don't apologize.** If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed. Avoid pointing out your own imagined inadequacies; your audience has a higher opinion of you than you think.
7. **Concentrate on the message -- not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties, and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.
8. **Turn nervousness into positive energy.** Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
9. **Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

[Excerpted from "[10 Tips For Successful Public Speaking](#)" with modifications by the editor.]

### Tips for handling Q & A

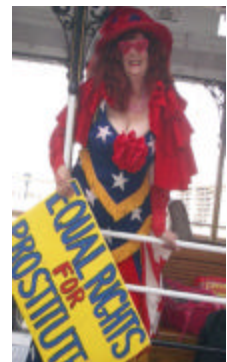
- If you don't hear the question or understand it, ask the questioner to repeat it.
- Try to keep calm, even if your audience is hostile or upset.
- Always respect the questioner, even if you do not like the question or the manner in which it is posed.
- Don't feel offended if someone asks you a question that you feel you already answered in your presentation or a previous question, they may not have heard or understood the information previously presented.
- Honesty is the best policy, if you don't know the answer to something, admit it - you can offer to contact the person later with an answer.

[Excerpted from "[Handling Q & A](#)"]

## C. Art and Messaging

### Messaging

We can have the loveliest and most inspiring event possible, but if the political message isn't clear, we won't get our point across. Having signs, banners, and images that represent our demands clearly is crucial. The more photogenic the puppet, the more we must be sure to include a sign or label that makes our position known, as together this is the image most likely to make it on the news. It is helpful to 'think backwards', and imagine what the picture



is

you most want to see on the front page of the paper the next day, and tailor your message towards that end.



The next step in your message development is picking the target audience. It flows directly from your understanding of what needs to happen in the campaign at this point. What is the current demand on the table? Who needs to be convinced in order for that demand to be met? Is it the general public, government officials, or the sex worker community, you are trying to affect? If it is sex workers, then a celebratory image may be just the right image. If it is not only sex workers, a different more conservative image may get a stronger message across. Think through the major themes of the campaign, and represent one or two strongly. For your largest

simple message. Accept it: You're not going to be able to communicate all the points and shades of gray about the issue you'd like to. Figure out the most important point, and how to convey it concisely.

Examples of Effective Messages:

- Decriminalize Prostitution
- Stop arresting prostitutes
- Sex workers rights are human rights!
- Jesus loves prostitutes



## Leaflets

One of the most important tasks that is often overlooked is leafletting the public during demonstrations and actions. Activists too often end up leafletting other activists about other issues of possible interest, instead of concentrating on communicating to the as-yet-unconvinced or not-yet organized. A good leaflet should include a number of elements:

1. Visual appeal. Make it pretty and legible and people will want to read it.
2. Explain clearly what the demonstration is about, in as few words as possible. People either read a leaflet immediately upon receiving it, or not at all. Try and make it as 'catchy' as possible. If more explanation is desired, put that on the back, and those that are drawn in will read on to the detail.
3. Include what our arguments are to our opponents; give information and facts that they can use themselves.
4. Include your group's contact information, and any action that allies could take: i.e. your next meeting time and place, names & numbers of representatives that should be called, etc. Use leaflets as a tool to ORGANIZE, not only to inform!

## Signs

There are a variety of ways to make signs. Here are some possibilities:

1. Choose your canvas. Poster board works well, but cardboard cut from old boxes can be just as useful and is much more cost effective.
2. Lettering. Use paints or thick markers. Choose bold colors (red, black, dark green) or bright colors (yellow, orange, pink) outlined by black.
3. Messaging. Keep it simple and short! Your audience will lose interest if you write a novel.
4. Images. These can add to or take away from your message. Again, simplicity is often more effective. Use images that are obvious, such as handcuffs or a picture of a well-recognized public official.

## Making Protest Banners



1. Choose strong material (Paint drop cloth works great. You can usually pick this up at a hardware store for about \$20, which buys you a 9X12 canvas.)
2. Cut the 9x12 in half and tie (or sew) together the pieces to form a longer 4.5x24ft long banner.
3. Attach grommets (which are also available at hardware store). It's best to place the grommets about 3 feet apart from one another along the top of banner.
4. If the banner is to be hung, use rope or zip-ties.
5. Remember it is illegal in some places to affix timber or metal poles to protest banners or signs in street marches. This can be overcome by using the cardboard tubes out of rolls of cloth.
6. Paint your lettering! Keep it simple and short so that it can be seen from long distances. Black or Red on white background is the easiest to see.
7. If the banner is to be out in the weather for some weeks then it is advisable to paint all the material with a coat of paint before adding the text to prevent mildew.
8. Weights: You want to attach weights to the banner to prevent it from flapping or blowing in the wind. The cheapest solution is to attach plastic bags filled with some rice or sand to the bottom of the banner.  
**WARNING:** make sure these weights are securely attached. It is a felony to drop or throw something from an overpass onto moving traffic.

If you are making several banners all at the same time, it may be advantageous to make a stencil and use a small paint roller. Banners made using a stencil usually look better but it still takes time to make a stencil and then touch up the banner where the paint has run under the stencil.