PHILLY STANDS UP

Accountability Road Map

An Accountability road map sketches out a process to give it structure while clarifying intentions, goals and allowing you to get a sense of the trajectory and the big picture. Because accountability processes are never linear or clear cut, we use a road map instead of an agenda; Road maps have ample room for construction, road blocks and detours. They help you maintain sense of your over all goals, while remaining flexible and open to re-routing paths and re-imagining the journey once you've started.

The Five Major Phases of Accountability Processes

There are endless ways to map out phases of an accountability process, but here are the five most common phases we have charted in our work and experience:

1. Identifying Behaviors

The first step in a process is that a person must have an awareness and understanding of the actions and behaviors for which they are being called out. This is foundational and can sometimes take longer to accomplish than you might imagine.

2. Accepting Harm Done

Building on the understanding of what specific behaviors led them to this accountability process, the next step is to acknowledge in what ways these behaviors were harmful--even if harm wasn't their intention. This is the seed of one of the most frequent goals in a process: building empathy.

3. Looking for Patterns

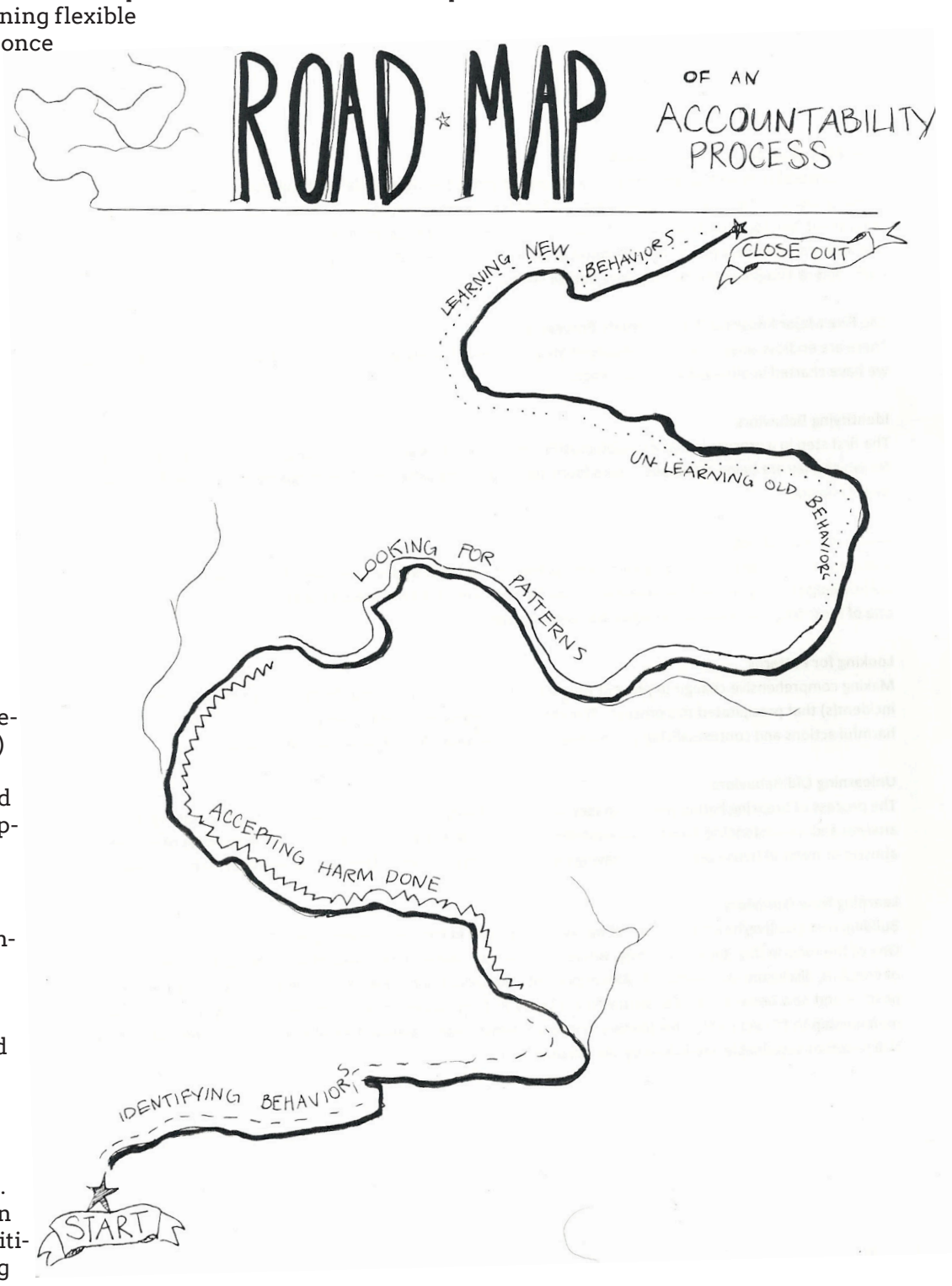
Making Comprehensive change to prevent future assault requires broadening the focus beyond the isolated incident(s) that precipitated this process. This means identifying and naming the person's history of abusive/harmful actions and contextualizing these behaviors in their underlying assumptions and socialization.

4. Unlearning Old Behaviors

The process of breaking habits starts with identifying harmful dynamics and then deepens beyond naming to analysis and understanding. Gaining an awareness and determining the kinds of situations that trigger or enable abusive or harmful behaviors and then having clear strategies to avoid and diffuse the potential path for harm.

5. Learning New Behaviors

Building new positive/healing patterns of behavior goes hand in hand with breaking down the old harmful patterns. One of the tools in this stage is role play, where a person can rehearse their consent practices, graceful acceptance of criticism, disclosure strategies, etc. Also important is becoming familiar with their resources to support positive and new behavior [affordable therapy, sites to find jobs, a clearly defined network of supportive friends, membership to the gym, etc.] This phase is very much about understanding the ways to build new behaviors so this skill becomes sustainable and fueled by self reliance.



CRITICAL RESISTANCE ABOLITION ORGANIZING TOOLKIT

Imagining Alternatives

The following is an excerpt from A World Without Walls: Critical Resistance Abolition Organizing Toolkit, *created by members in 2003. After the PIC is abolished, we will need to work together to resolve conflict and harm when they take place. Here are two examples of conflict resolution that have been used successfully without involving the PIC. If you would like a copy of our toolkit, please write to us and we will send you one.*

Exercise 1
Alternatives to Punishment Role Play

Come up with a situation where harm has happened in your community. For this role play you need a person to play the harmer, one to play the person being harmed, and others to play friends and family for both people. Remember that friends and family can be connected to both people—especially if the harm in question is in the setting of a family or neighborhood.

As a group, figure out:

1. How you're going to meet. Who will facilitate, especially when emotions are high? How will decisions be made?
2. What is the harm that happened, and how is it still felt?
3. How can you resolve the issue without police or prisons?

The point of challenging our individual and collective common senses isn't to point out whose ideas and instincts are wrong or need to be corrected and changed. The exercise is meant to help us see not just what we think about safety, but how many things we think about safety. This again makes the point that abolition is about building a world that is safe in multiple and lasting ways. Spending time working through what we think and how we came to think in those ways about safety is an important step in that work.

Exercise 2
Circles

The circle is a well-known and successful transformative justice practice that comes from the aboriginal communities of the Yukon in Canada. At the very least, circles are usually made up of two discussion facilitators, the person who inflicted the harm, the person harmed, family members, and members of the community affected by the harm. In circles conducted under the direction of the state, lawyers and officials in the punishment system are also involved.

Following a set of core principles on which everyone involved agrees, the circle goes through a process to think about the problem. First, the circle tries to understand the harm done. What happened? Why did it happen? Next, as much as possible, the circle designs a tailor-made response for repairing the harm and addressing some of its causes. The person who did the harm can volunteer to compensate the person who was harmed if damage to physical property happened. If a history of interpersonal conflict led to the incident, the facilitator can help come up with an understanding between the people involved, disagreements can be mediated, and disputes can be resolved. Neighbors and peers can form support networks for assisting the recovery and transformation of both the person harmed and person who inflicted the harm. If the appropriate resources exist, counseling and drug treatment can also be provided.

Circle Role Play Exercise

Use a circle to address a specific incident. First, think of an example of harm, such as an as-

sault, that people in your group could possibly experience. Describe the important background information that you will all need to know about the incident. Next, think of the people involved and affected. In addition to the person/s harmed and the person/s who harmed, think of family members, friends, and community people who were somehow affected. From this list of people, assign different roles for people to act out.

Here is one example to help think about how to deal with an incident in which a young person is responsible for committing the act of harm.

Incident
One high school student has severely beaten another high school student to the point where the youth who was beaten will have permanent facial damage.

Background Knowledge
The high school youth who committed the act of violence has an alcoholic father who beats him. Add other background details that might reflect your own particular community. Feel free to spontaneously improvise details during the role play.

Cast of Characters
If possible, have at least the youth, their parents or guardians, two discussion facilitators, a high school teacher, and a neighbor. Other cast members could include sisters and brothers of the youth or classmates of the youth.

After you have taken the necessary steps to develop a situation and cast of characters, follow this circle process.

Sit in chairs arranged in a circle. Use a talking piece that can be held in your hands and passed from one person to another. This talking piece shows who is speaking. Only one person speaks at a time. The talking piece passes around in the circle from one person to another so that all have an opportunity to speak if they want to. The facilitators will then lead the group through a discussion highlighting the following questions:

(Note: For some of these questions, the talking piece may need to go around the circle more than once.)

1. What values or principles should guide our circle as we discuss both what happened and how we plan to address it?
2. What happened? How were you affected by what occurred?
3. As much as possible, what can we do to repair the harm that has been done?
4. What can we do to prevent future forms of harm in our community?

When the circle has arrived at its final resolutions, step out of character and discuss the experience. What did you like? What didn't you like? Do you think circles are a potentially effective way of addressing harm?

ALTERNATIVES, CONTINUED

Instead of Prisons: Restitution

BY THE PRISON RESEARCH EDUCATION ACTION PROJECT

The following is an excerpt from Instead of Prisons: A Handbook for Abolitionists *published in 1976 by the Prison Research Education Action Project (PREAP) and reprinted in 2005 by Critical Resistance. When thinking of a world without imprisonment, policing, and surveillance, it is important to think creatively about what tools we would use instead to keep one another safe and respond to harm when it does occur. Restitution is a feasible response to many of the activities that have been criminalized and used to put youth, the working poor, and people of color in cages.*

Although many things have changed since 1976—and even since 2005—this piece remains relevant by shedding light on yet another strategy for dismantling the prison industrial complex while building collective responses to interpersonal and state violence today and in the future. Some terms used in this piece, such as "lawbreaker" and "wrongdoer," are not terms that CR uses because they criminalize and label people based on an action. Reading this piece gives us an opportunity to see how language has changed since 1976 and to imagine the possibilities for new terms and meanings in a world without the PIC.

Restitution to victims is a promising concept, but the prison setting hampers its most compelling aspects. For restitution to be creative and reconciliatory, the following conditions are important:

- Restitution should be truly voluntary.
- Restitution should occur in the community to bring the wronged and the wrongdoer together.
- Restitution should lessen the desire for vengeance and encourage reconciliation.

The potential for broad, creative use of restitution as an excarceration model excites the abolitionist's imagination. Most offenses for which people are committed to prisons are economic crimes: theft, fraud, robbery, burglary, and embezzlement. Though restitution can be utilized in practically all wrongdoings, it is most obviously appropriate for economic crimes. "If a loan, freely made with honest intent to return it, is not repaid, the lender has a legal right to proceed against the borrower. It would seem to make sense to apply that same procedure in economic relationships where the loan is of involuntary or fraudulent nature."

ART BY JOSE VILLARREAL

Abolitionists believe restitution makes a great deal of sense as an alternative to incarceration, not only in non-violent crimes but also in those involving violence. The idea of advocating restitution where loss of life is involved should not startle Americans. It is not without precedent. For generations the U.S. government has made restitution to survivors of members of the armed forces killed in combat or by accident. Similarly, survivors of citizens killed by auto accidents are monetarily reimbursed by insurance companies or through civil suits.

While restitution options are welcome alternatives to prison at any point after a wrong has been committed, it is most meaningful in the pre-arrest or pretrial period when handled in community settings, bypassing the system entirely. Abolitionists recommend dispute and mediation centers as the most desirable places for restitution agreements to be negotiated by conflicting parties. There, settings and goals are more consistent with the purposes of restitution as a reconciliatory process. However, settlements can also prove effective when arranged in court at presentencing or sentencing procedures.

Restitution need not be only in the form of money. If the wrongdoer is wealthy and can "buy" his/her way out of taking responsibility for wrongs committed, a sentence or mediation agreement can utilize the lawbreaker's skills or training to benefit the victim or society in general. Contributing services is superior to the extravagant costs and damaging effects of the prison sentence and a better use of time.

Presently, the criminal (in)justice system's selection process usually leaves out the poor and minorities as candidates for restitution as an alternative to prison. Restitution options should be available to *all* lawbreakers, not only those who can afford the money or possess the skills to contribute services. Statutes must be uniformly protective of the rights of the poor to make restitution in whatever way possible, given their life situations, and a wide range of options should be included for them to do so.

Outside the System
Restitution is an ideal community mediation and excarceration mode:

- It keeps the lawbreaker in the community, permitting him/her to correct the original wrong.
- In some measure, it corrects the discomfort and inconvenience caused the victim.
- It brings the victim and the wrongdoer together as human beings, not as stereotypes.
- It lessens the community's need for vengeance and contributes to needed reconciliation and restoration.
- It saves the community, the state, and the affected individuals the economic and psychic costs of trial and probable imprisonment.
- It reduces the role of criminal law.