

Accountability to the Collective

Generally, people join groups because they share common interests. The coming together is probably the easiest part of coalition-building. The challenges of working together in an efficient and united manner emerge when it is clear that work styles differ (or the non-existent!) and when any “ism” begins to invade or destroy the democratic process and/or space.

Accountability here simply means responsible and answerable to others for our ideas and actions. Here are a few suggestions to consider for maximizing group accountability while at the same time, increasing productivity and for a group while decreasing conflict and confusion.

Communications

1. Acknowledge people in a timely way whether it's in person, via internet or phone calls. This helps keep the flow of information moving so that tasks are completed or internal issues are resolved.
2. While in discussions, be direct but respectful. Be mindful of the length and focus of your comments.
3. If you have an issue with a person, the process, a tactic, etc. raise it immediately to get it resolved in the most principled manner possible. If necessary, don't hesitate to ask for a third party if it means a timely resolution. Transparency and honesty are good antidotes for liberalism.

Challenging Isms

1. It is not the sole responsibility of an oppressed group to educate the collective on behaviors that are hurtful and politically incorrect. Everyone should strive to recognize the various manifestations of racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, etc. and check/challenge it when it surfaces.
2. Each person is responsible for his/her own behavior. When errors have been made, it is important to have self-criticism or to be open to constructive criticism from others.
3. It is not enough to have self-criticism or graciously accept constructive criticism; sometimes this becomes a perpetual cycle. One needs to radically and seriously break with behaviors that undermine the group's desire for achieving full democratic participation and transformation.

Carrying Out the Work

1. Any task you take on should be done in a timely and effective way as your assignment is connected to others carrying out their respective tasks. Our collective efforts are what move us to reaching our goals.
2. If you cannot make your deadline, let the anchor/lead person know so that adjustments can be made and the process doesn't get stalled or shut down.
3. Take initiative and be proactive to prevent avoidable contradictions. Being supportive to each other is always a welcome refuge as we wage the fight against capitalism and its manifestations.