

LOVE RESISTS

HANDOUT 3

**Choosing A Partner & Creating
Effective Partnerships for Your
Congregation's Love Resists
Team**

Engaging Your Congregation with Love Resists

Have a core group or small group ministry team initiate a partnership and build a congregational partnership over time. Learn more at [Starting Your Love Resists Team](#).

Choosing A Partner & Creating Effective Partnerships for Your Congregation's Love Resists Team

First do some research to find out who is working to stop mass incarceration, mass deportation, Islamophobia and transphobia in your community. It might be a grassroots organization, or another congregation or faith community, or your UU state action network, or a multi-faith coalition, or a service provider, a student group, an advocacy group or progressive attorneys. An important principle of Love Resists is to get direction and guidance from those most impacted by the policies of criminalization, so if your partner is not a grassroots community organization, it's important that they are in relationship with and taking leadership from those communities.

Considerations for choosing partner groups include:

1. Is the group or organization actively seeking support and partners?
2. Do they need volunteers?
3. Do they have the respect of communities that are impacted by criminalization and repression?
4. Are they open to working with a faith community? Do they have values that resonate with Unitarian Universalism?
5. Are they known in the community and do they take action in the public arena?
6. Is there a match between what the partner group needs and the congregation's resources, aspirations, and ability to make a real difference?
7. Is there a current campaign that the congregation can plug into and support? Or services that the congregation can provide?
8. Are there opportunities for healing and reparations that can come through partnership?
9. Are there opportunities for community-building, through mutual work, attending each other's meetings, worship services, events, and celebrations?

Initiating Partnerships

- Reach out to the potential partner group and offer your support. Trust that offering your love and support will be received as a gift but understand
- If you are approaching a faith community have your minister or board president make the first contact to reassure them of the 'legitimacy' of your invitation.
- Approach this new relationship as you would any relationship. Find out if there is interest, mutual concerns and goals, and opportunities to do things together.
- It's fine to send a note but do so with a promise to call and then pick up the phone!
- Meet up and explore your mutual concerns and where you can provide support.
- Follow through on one next step.
- Make sure to check-in and get your potential partner's feedback.

Elements of Effective Partnerships & Potential 'Bumps' to Be Aware of:

1. Be aware of you and your congregation's 'social location' and how your experiences regarding race, sexual orientation, class, citizenship status and other identities influence your assumptions about situations and solutions.
2. Remember that being a good ally often means stepping back, and taking leadership from those most impacted.
3. Consider the comfort and safety of individuals and communities currently facing criminalization, repression, and/or violence. Some actions, events or publicity can be problematic for certain communities.
4. Be creative in planning actions. If you are uncertain whether an event or action is appropriate, ask.
5. Be sure to follow through on all promised actions or be transparent and re-negotiate when you cannot.
6. Make sure to check-in and get feedback on how things are going.
7. Approach inevitable conflicts calmly and directly. Prioritize long-term relationships over short-term differences of opinion.
8. Know that your partner may not be familiar with the timelines and capacity of your congregation and what you can and cannot deliver and in what timeframe.
9. Expect to make mistakes, 'own' them and start again.
10. Respect, mutual support, and trust are the keys to effective partnership and know that it takes time and commitment for these to grow and flourish.