



Worth Fighting For: A Post-Election Community Gathering Guide

Guidance for Facilitators + How to Use This Doc

If you're reading this document, this moment isn't where we wanted to be. We know it may feel impossible. We're here to help as best we can. The "we" in this case is Indivisible and our progressive organizational allies. We put together the plan that follows as an offering of what to do now.

There are a lot of different ideas out there about what comes next. **We're inviting you to start by gathering in community.** This guide offers a structure for how to hold a space for yourself and fellow activists to process, strengthen community, and begin to ready ourselves for the future. We always knew we would still have work to do after election day, no matter the outcome. Now it's time to take a beat and integrate with each other so we can be ready for what's next. *You may feel this moment calls for something different, or you may want to be part of larger public responses. Please know this is meant as one option, and you can choose what fits you and your community best.*

Notes for facilitators:

If you're going to be the one coordinating or facilitating one of these gatherings, first of all, thank you. It's a lot to step up and hold space when you're also still processing. Here are some notes on making the most of the plan below.

- The agenda is a suggested structure that can be modified.
- The suggested wording is also just that - suggested.
- This plan includes frameworks that you as the facilitator will be holding or articulating - both in terms of how to hold space during emotional moments, as well as about how to understand and organize under authoritarianism. If you feel uncertain about representing or guiding any of this, you can contextualize it by naming your own uncertainty or the source you're working from (that is, this doc) - or reach out to a fellow volunteer leader, staff member, or other person you organize with to talk it through and feel comfortable with the material.
- Please make sure you read the full guide and feel comfortable guiding the content for others, especially the "Getting Real About Power" section.

The Plan

STRUCTURE AND TIMING



- Option 1: One sitting, ~2.5hr (does not include breaks)
- Option 2: Two sittings, ~1 - 2hr each, about a week apart
- In any structure, we recommend including unstructured gathering time outside the structure below. This could be a potluck or meal before or after, a long break for snacks and mingling halfway through, or something else that makes sense to you.

GOALS



- Strengthen community spirit for what's ahead
- Give voice to our emotions in these times
- Share plans on what we want to offer each other going forward
- Learn from past movements and history that can inform how we make meaning now

NUMBER OF PEOPLE



- Smaller gatherings can be 3-7 people
- Larger gatherings can be 10-50 (breaking into small groups when appropriate) people

WHERE



- Nationwide - in your home, in a public or community space like a library or neighborhood restaurant, and/or through virtual/online (zoom meetings) if that is a better fit for you and your community/geography.

WHEN



- Within a week of election results
- *If later is better for you, this guide should still help*

MATERIALS NEEDED



- Space to sit/gather comfortably
- Materials to write on (could be a flipchart and markers or just paper and pens)

After We Gather: Show Our Shared Strength

Post the commitments you're making with a picture or simple image and the hashtag #WorthFightingFor. Email your post to supportteam@indivisible.org. See more below.

Agenda in Summary

Part 1: Processing (60 mins suggested)

- [Welcome and instructions](#)
- [Why we're here](#)
- [Holding our feelings](#)
- Break

Part 2: Integrating (30 mins suggested)

- [Thanking each other](#) and acknowledging our work
- [We all have a role](#)
- Break

Part 3: Getting Ready (50 mins suggested)

- [Becoming an inviting movement](#)
- [Getting real about power](#)
- [What's next](#)
- [Closing with appreciations](#)

If you are doing this in 2 sessions, you can pause after Part 1 if you want to take more time for Processing, or after Part 2 if you want to spend more time on Getting Ready.

Agenda in Full

Part 1: Processing

Welcome and Instructions (15min)

Sample Welcome Language:

Welcome, everyone! We are so glad you are here for this community gathering. It is right and good to be in community in hard times. We want this to be a space to express ourselves and commit to acting together.

We know that Kamala Harris has conceded. Yes, Donald Trump will be President of the United States.

There's a lot that is going to happen and change. And so it's right to be in spaces with others to hold each other and prepare for what's next.

Depending on your own style, community, cultural context, or who is coming, you may want to start with some kind of ritual or structure that makes sense, such as:

- Group Guidelines
- Singing
- Prayer or poem
- Go-around where everyone introduces themselves (split into small groups if more than 10 people)

Pick an opening that is inclusive and welcoming for the group that you think is coming.

Why We're Here (10min)

Sample language:

There are many different reasons that bring us here. We have a diversity of views, people, hopes, dreams, and fears. We don't have to agree on everything. We may disagree, for example, about what led to Trump getting elected or what's the most important thing to do next. But in community, we can find connection even when we don't see things the same way. We're going to take a moment to share with each other what brought us here.

If the group is under 10 people, do a go-around where each person introduces themselves and shares why they came today.

If the group is more than 10 people, have people mingle - moving around the room and connecting with different people for brief 1-on-1 interactions. The task is the same - to share about what brought you here today.

Space to Hold Our Feelings (35 min)

Many groups and people may find it helpful to have designated time to process and potentially share about their feelings. Consider who is coming, the relationships they have to each other, and your own gut instinct around **how much time** and **what structure of sharing** makes the most sense for your gathering.

Sample language:

I want to welcome all of us and all parts of us.

I know there are a lot of different reactions to the election. We have our fears. Our

rage. Our anger at how this could happen. Our disgust. Our confusion. Our deep disappointment — many of us are arriving exhausted from the sprint of elections and now collapsing with despair.

Some folks may be in touch with deep steadiness and generational resistance to injustice. Some of us are ready to plow right into action. Some are tired and can't imagine anything will help. Others are just sitting with big feelings.

Some people, especially those who worked really hard to try to prevent this, may feel so much despair that they're driven to disengage.

All of us have some version of a heavy heart. These are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. It's important right now not to shame or judge each other's responses to this moment. There will be a time to move those around us toward action. But before we even explore acting in the future, let's give our hearts some space to speak.

We're going to take some time now to process and share about our feelings.

Sample structure:

- Distribute notecards, scrap paper, or other materials to write on
- Invite people to take 10-20 min to journal, draw, write about their feelings - or sit quietly in contemplation
- Provide a flexible amount of time (10-45 min) for people to share out
 - In a very small group, everyone who wants to could share after their solo time.
 - In a larger group, a few people could share to the group.
 - In any size, you could have people
 - Pair up and share with each other (perhaps more than once)
 - Mingle for a set amount of time
 - Put their notecards up on a shared visible space/wall

Some folks may prefer to do this section in a more ritualized way - using physical materials like saltwater or matches to symbolize the emotional processing, by gathering all the feelings into a shared bowl or structure, or something else. Because preferences here can vary so widely across communities, we once again encourage you to choose a path that feels attuned to your community and that you as a facilitator feel comfortable leading.

Relatedly it may be helpful to open a door or window, or have some sort of symbolic item such as a pitcher full of water that you will pour out, that you can highlight at

the beginning and come back to at the end. The point of this is not to shut people off from discussing their emotions or processing, but to acknowledge that we could spend all our time on this space and that we're going to make a transition to the next parts of the agenda. Folks should feel encouraged to return to discussions during other moments (if you are having a meal after) or setting up time to talk with one another outside of this space.

Break (time TBD)

Break for 10-15 minutes and have snacks available if possible.

Sample language:

We have different feelings, and that means we'll have different initial strategies about what to do next. That's okay. Our reason we're here is not just to grieve together — it's because we're going to dust ourselves off, maybe take some rest, and get back up and fight. We'll get into some of that after the break.

- If you're doing these gatherings in two parts, now is a place you could break. If you do so, include a gentle wrap-up (jump down to [Closing with appreciations](#) for an example).

Part 2: Integrating

Thanking Each Other and Acknowledging Our Work (10min)

Sample language:

There's no sugarcoating. We have a long road ahead. It's serious. It's bad. A Trump Presidency means a number of things taken to more extremes.

At the same time, we must be clear: democracy is in peril - but it's not finished. We have within ourselves enormous power to hold off harm, stand up to this would-be fascist, and protect our democracy, our neighbors, and ourselves. Fascists do their best to convince you to give up hope and give up your power - we aren't going to do that.

There are some good resources to explore some of those specifics more. We're not going to go too far into that now—many of the hopes and fears we mentioned earlier already relate to these.

But we want to remind each other that in this room is a caring community of people who have already contributed to fighting for justice.

We can hold disappointment and fear about what we know is to come since we have lived through it before— and also gratitude to everyone who worked so hard for this not to happen and to create a more just world.

Let's start off by highlighting what we have done.

What are some of the things people did to contribute this past year? Even if it was small. We can name the work we did or the work others in this room did that we saw and appreciated.

Invite people to share about what action they took or saw other members of their community take to fight Trump and MAGA - during the first administration, during this election cycle, or in between.

We All Have a Role (20min)

Sample language:

Taking into account all that folks were able to accomplish, we are going to need to continue to build our collective power over the next few years. There are going to be a lot of roles needed.

Let's restate: Trump will control the presidency, and that means he'll have a great deal of power.

But his power is not limitless. That's not how the American government works, and he can't change that overnight. Our task over the next four years will be to harness the enormous power that we have and to use the institutions, levers, and tactics available to us - to protect ourselves and communities under threat, to fight for our democracy, and to ultimately get the MAGA movement out of power.

This will look different based on who you are, where you are, and what you can do. Each of us has a role to play. But remember: the fascist playbook relies on convincing us that they've won, that there's nothing more to do, and that pushing back is pointless. It's not true. We have power now and we will build more power as we go.

Over the next four years, we will do many things.

Talk through the four main categories of how to understand our roles going forward:



PROTECT PEOPLE

harm reduction,
protect targeted people

DISRUPT AND DISOBEY

strategize acts to support
disobedience and protest policy



DEFEND CIVIC INSTITUTIONS

safeguard democratic
institutions (elections, EPA, etc)

BUILD ALTERNATIVES

parallel institutions,
alternative party platforms,
new culture-building



Protect People

We are going to need to advocate to protect people directly targeted by these policies who are at the spear-tip of these policies. Trans people. Folks choosing abortions. Immigrants and beyond. This may look like pushing your state or local government to adopt protective policies, or - if your local government is hostile - organizing to stop them from taking additional harmful action. It includes open and underground organizing for health care, safety in schools, safe homes. Wherever we are, we need to use the tools at our disposal.

Defend Democracy, Civic Institutions, and Electoral Competition

We will also need to focus on defending civic institutions. We know Trump will go after our civic institutions, from attacking the civil service and weaponizing government agencies to do his bidding to undermining the ability to hold competitive elections. We'll need to model a culture of dissent and support for those resisting and trying to uphold their missions on the inside of government. We'll need to organize to mount overwhelming public pushback on efforts to undermine the key constitutional and legal rules that uphold our democracy. And we'll need to push actors with power in American society - from our own state governments to corporations to faith communities - to hold those red lines.

A note on elections - it likely feels premature to talk about future elections in this moment, when we're all exhausted and disheartened from the last campaign. And you may hear Trump and the MAGA movement try to squash hope that future elections will matter. That's part of the fascist playbook, too. That's why it's important to be clear: we will have elections in the future, and - if we protect our

institutions and build our own power - we can and will win them. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Disrupt and Disobey

This goes beyond protesting for better policies into the territory of people intervening to stop bad policies or showing resistance. Some of that will be fierce and in your face, but others will be quiet strikes and work slowdowns.

In other authoritarian regimes, there are two ways to remove dictators: vote them out, or mass nonviolent noncooperation by the people to force them. This wing is the part that would help design that second strategy.

Build Our Power

We have to build our own political power to insist on something better. This means organizing locally to transform power in your own community. It means fighting for better policies, wherever you are. It means investing in new leaders who can go on offense against MAGA. We can't just be reacting. Some of us are going to have to focus on a new path forward.

These roles are not set in stone or all-encompassing. They speak to different tactics that might be taken at different times in our resistance.

Give folks time to process what these roles mean.

- Turn to the person next to you and discuss these roles. Which of the different roles you are most interested in? (5 mins)
 - Another question could be: what are 3 ways you could see one of these roles being a necessary part of resistance in the first 100 days?
- After folks have had some discussion, go through each of the 4 categories and ask who saw themselves in each.
- Have folks move into those specific groups. Write down each other's names and contact information.

Break (time TBD)

Process Note:

- ➔ If you are doing this whole gathering in one sitting, now could be a good time for a longer break, or even a meal or other unstructured gathering time.
- ➔ If you are breaking up into two sittings, this is another option for where you could break. If you do so, include a gentle wrap-up (jump down to [Closing with appreciations](#) for an example).

Part 3: Getting Ready

Becoming an Inviting Movement (15min)

Sample language:

One thing people who have been living under autocracies have been telling us is that the political space can really start to shrink. They say the biggest reason isn't because of violent repression. It's because people get scared. They start to live smaller lives. They start to shrink and wilt. They don't use the political space they have.

We cannot do that. We have to keep living big, bold lives — that's how we defend the threat of shrinking political space. Use it.

There will be lots of realignment under Trump. Some of us may be thinking about holiday dinners or awkward meetings we are having with people who are Trump supporters in our lives.

For those of us who plan to resist Trump and the people plotting his Project 2025 agenda, there are a few dynamics and groups of people we can expect to come into contact with:

- *First, those who are with us ideologically and perhaps even have been very active in the past, but for whom his win has pushed them into despair or disengagement.*
 - *For these folks, it's important not to judge or shame them, but to look for opportunities to re-engage and reconnect over time.*
- *Second, there will be people who voted for Trump, but who can be moved away from supporting him over time.*
 - *It can feel really complex to imagine aligning yourself with these folks as allies. There's no need to rush into doing so today or even tomorrow but it's important to understand that we will have at least some opportunities to shift their support in the future.*
- *Third, there will be people who are disengaged from the political process. They may not have voted, or not have voted regularly. They may simply feel that none of this matters.*
 - *For these folks, it's also important to avoid shame or judgment - we want to look for opportunities to help them understand why getting involved can matter.*

As Trump gets into office, we predict three things:

1. It will be chaotic. *There will appear to be a storm of activity, as Trump's people move quickly on their agenda. Their goal is to demoralize us and make us feel isolated. There will be chaos for us as we respond to the many things his administration tries to make happen.*

2. Out of the chaos, real things that people care about will be broken. *Trump has managed to succeed in getting elected, capitalizing on popular discontent and the sense that it "wasn't that bad" the first time. Once he takes office, he will no longer be the candidate of change. He'll be accountable for his policies, not just his hazy promises. On a daily basis, people will ask: is my life better off than it was before?*

Trump's actual policies - from abortion bans to attacks on healthcare to taxes for the rich to mass deportation - are not popular. As he tries to implement them, we'll fight back - and we'll take advantage of the backlash to cleave supporters away from his coalition and build our own.

3. How we act matters. *Are we going to receive Trump's supporters? Are we prepared to politically reorient them? Are we going to reach out to people who are disengaged and distrustful of politics? Or are we going to stay exclusive and preach to our own choir?*

For those of us on the Left we've talked about "the movement" and meant one thing. This moment there will be new relationships, allies, and changing political affiliations and ways of thinking. That's good because there's opportunity in realignment. Those of us who want to fight for a multiracial, truly democratic, and just society can help shape that future.

In pairs, have people think about one person they have in their life that they think might be moveable in the future. Have people think of statements that they could make that are condemnatory and reframe them with statements that might be inviting. (Such as moving from "I can't believe you supported him" to "Well, I think we'll see.")

If folks are not yet ready for this, they are welcome to skip it.

Sample language to close with:

Under Serbian dictator Milosevic, a group called Otpor in Serbia used to regularly say to the dictator's supporters, "You'll get your chance to join us." They said this to bystanders, bureaucrats, and even police who were beating them up. Their goal was

to soften the opposition and promote defections from within — which is how authoritarian leaders eventually fall.

Let's explore a little more how unjust leaders fall.

Getting Real About Power (25 min)

Sample language:

Under a democratic regime, the will of the people matters. In this country, that's been true in some ways and not at all in others.

But one thing we know: Trump has been very clear about using his political power to the fullest—stretching and breaking norms and laws that get in his way.

We're not going to convince him not to do these things. We're not going to stop him from doing these things just through persuasive tactics or showing that there are a LOT of us who oppose them (and there are a LOT of people who oppose his radical policies).

There's a piece of theory we wanted to share about power to explore this.

It's called the Pillars of Support.

It starts with the way most of us view and experience power.

Traditional power is viewed as a pyramid, where power flows from the top downward. Those at the top have power, while those at the bottom don't.

[draw]



In that view, we win by replacing or convincing those at the top.

That sometimes works. This tool was built under dictatorships. There are two ways to get dictators out: successfully vote them out, as occasionally happens. Or force them out. And that requires a more accurate model to understand power. It starts with an

upside-down triangle. Like an upside-down triangle, power can be unstable. It naturally topples over without anything supporting it.

To prevent that, power relies on support to keep it upright.

[draw]



Pillars of support may include governments, media, shareholders, and policymakers.

But regular people give our consent, too: farmers, janitors, truck drivers, and everyone who keeps society functioning.

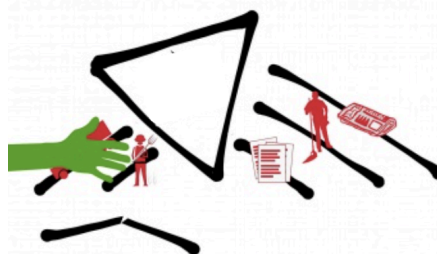
As nonviolence theorist Gene Sharp explained, "By themselves, rulers cannot collect taxes, enforce repressive laws and regulations, keep trains running on time, prepare national budgets, direct traffic, manage ports, print money, repair roads, keep food supplied to the markets, make steel, build rockets, train the police and the army, issue postage stamps or even milk a cow. People provide these services to the ruler through a variety of organizations and institutions. If the people stop providing these skills, the ruler cannot rule."

And that gives us power. Knowing about the pillars of support helps us analyze a situation. What happens if we remove one pillar?

The upside-down triangle is less stable — though it keeps functioning.

Removing one pillar alone rarely wins. But it is often enough to gain major, and life-saving concessions.

[you can draw if you want]



And if we remove enough pillars of support — even though it's not all of them?

The upside-down triangle falls. That's the power of social movements!

We learned this tool from countries that have faced highly repressive regimes. Removing a pillar requires removing the support—it's different than just pleading or asking for a change. It's removing support from the upside-down triangle by refusing to obey, refusing orders, or using other tactics to withdraw our cooperation from a system that does not support us.

We'll offer resources for those who want to learn more about pillars of support.

Doing this requires identifying specific pillars. It requires thinking both about who is moveable and can be engaged or pushed to stop their support? It also means thinking about who is around you that you can get.

The long haul means we'll have short—and longer-term strategies. If mass noncooperation becomes a strategy, for example, it will take time to develop. We need time to prepare people for the possibility that we'll have to engage in large strikes or shut-downs to force major policy changes.

Take a moment to think: who are some of the pillars of support that we may want to target in an upcoming Trump Presidency? Even if we cannot win their complete removal, it may be important for blocking the bad things that Trump plans. Think of the [flight attendants union](#) who prepared a strike — which would have kept planes on the ground — forcing Trump to end Trump's government shutdown.

- Invite conversation around pillars of support we could target.
- If you have a recent win where this model applies, this is a great time to affirm that win — even if it was incomplete.

What's Next (5min)

Sample language:

We have reached the end of our plan for today. We have a few action items to do before we leave each other today:

- Set up a time to touch base with the folks within your specific role group (from the “We all have a role” section). During that meeting, continue the brainstorming from earlier, discuss how you might stay in touch and communicate or work together going forward.
 - For example - the people protectors may do some research around local organizations or hotlines that support trans or immigrant communities in the event of a sudden intense attack.
- Plan to attend a future gathering (name a date and time if you have it, ideally within the next two weeks).
 - Small groups can report out.
 - Your home organization/the progressive coalition may have likely next action steps so you can continue moving forward with your work.
- Ask everyone to commit to bringing along one or two friends, family, community members to join for the next meeting - this space is intended to continue growing.

Closing With Appreciations + Commitment to Action (5min)

Thank people for coming together. Invite people to share appreciation to others in this room — for food, for organizing, for work they’ve done, for friendship, for kind acts, for work I’ve vaguely seen, for what I would never do but am glad you do...

Sample closing language:

I’d like to close with a warning and an urging.

In the history of the world, no individual person has ever solved a major political problem on their own. We don’t have to be superheroes. We are ourselves doing our parts. The next few months will involve a lot of losing at the national level. Yes, we’re going to see some victories, too. But we will see a lot of rollback.

This means we have to pace ourselves.

Let’s not do what some of us did in 2016: join every protest and action right after Trump was elected, then burnout. We get to “tap out and tap in.” Act like a choir where we take turns breathing but sustain the sound.

We need to honor that sometimes we’ll be too tired to go on — we need breaks.

Pace ourselves. Be conscious and protective of our mental energy. Remember that what we do matters, even when we don't always see the results immediately.

So let's breathe together, lean in on each other, and pace ourselves for the long haul. We got this.

Last, it's time to **show our shared strength and our commitment to action**. Make a list of commitments you are making and the roles you will take on, then pair it with a picture or simple image and the hashtag **#WorthFightingFor**. Post line if comfortable, and email your post to supportteam@indivisible.org.

Handouts

This slidedeck can be shared as a handout:

National Community Gathering Handouts





7 BEHAVIORS TO STAY GROUNDED



Share 7 tips for how to strengthen our spirits to resist and thrive in challenging times: FindingSteadyGround.com

An article specifically from a therapist writing post-2016 election: <https://www.findingsteadyground.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Finding-Steady-Ground-in-the-Post-Election-Distress.pdf>



WHAT WILL YOU DO IF TRUMP WINS

Continue to explore scenarios with this **choose-your-own-adventure style** book!

You can explore the book or online at: WhatIfTrumpWins.org

(Also, interviews on how people have fought authoritarians and scenario-planning tools for teams.)





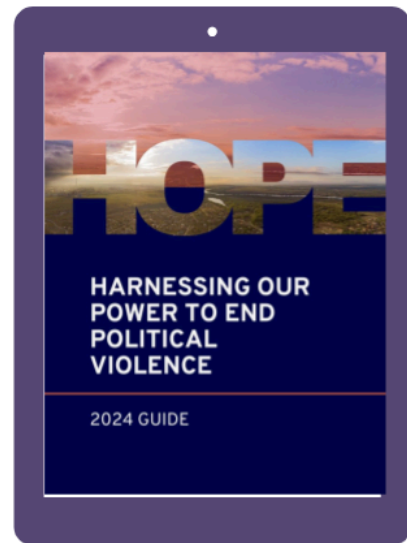
AUTHORITARIAN PLAYBOOK

If you want to dive deeper into what Trump might do, I suggest [The Authoritarian Playbook for 2025](#), created by Protect Democracy.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE?

Community responses to political violence can both support victims and impose costs on those who incite and engage in abuse. We need to stand up to those who want to silence our voices, who try to deny us our rights, and who aim to bully their way into political influence through intimidation and violence.

Download the guide at:
<https://www.endpoliticalviolence.org/>



INTERVIEWS OF RESISTANCE STRATEGIES

Democracy Is a Verb • Conversations with experienced organizers and movement thinkers and original reporting and analysis from the frontlines of the democracy struggle.

Lessons from activists who battled authoritarianism in Hungary, helped overthrow apartheid in South Africa, rebounded against political violence in the US, and overthrew their dictator in Serbia...



VIDEOS

Videos about how people have overthrown unjust regimes and the tactics they have used.

Movies by International Center for Nonviolent Conflict:

- [Bringing Down a Dictator](#) - Serbia
- [A Force More Powerful](#) - Chile, Denmark, South Africa, and more...

