

Activity: Prison Solidarity Meet and Greet (30 min)

This activity is not included in the Chicago PIC Teaching Collective's PIC 101 curriculum, but can be integrated into it if you have time and interest. It is designed to be conducted back to back with the activity called "Prison Town Game," which results in a visual "Web of Oppression." This activity leads participants to create a "Web of Resistance"; ours is Chicago-centric.

Objective: To familiarize participants with the 14-point platform of the Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People's Movement. To show that we are all connected in a web of resistance.

Materials needed:

Meet and Greet Cards, each printed on individual sheets—enough for all participants

Roll of string, yarn or twine

Hand-out with 14-point platform and connected organizations

1. Say that we are going to do an activity based on a platform created by a network of activists known as the Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People's Movement. The movement is led by people who have been or are currently incarcerated, and in 2011 they put out a 14-point platform of demands for prison reform and abolition. This activity connects their platform to local and national work we can get involved in, or are already involved in.
2. Hand out cards with each of the 14 demands. The cards also include a few examples of local and national organizing around each demand.
3. Say: *We are going to play social networking game—but instead of making connections between oppressive institutions and the people who run them, we'll be making connections between forms of resistance. We'll have a few minutes to go around and meet people, and get to know the demand they have on their card. Pay attention—you'll want to remember at least a couple of these.*
4. Give participants 10 minutes to mill around and meet people.
5. Come back together and stand in a circle. Say: *Now we are going to look at how all of these demands are connected. When it's your turn, please read out the demand on your card. We'll give you the end of the yarn, and you'll name one other person/demand who you are connected to.*
6. Give the first person the end of a ball of yarn. Have them read out the demand they had on their Meet and Greet card. Then ask them to toss the ball of yarn to one person who they talked to during the meet and greet. Repeat the activity until everyone is connected in a web.
7. Say: *It can be overwhelming to think about systems of oppression. We start to see that an oppressive system like the PIC is not just one event, but a whole web of interconnected institutions and forces that keep things working the way they are. At the same time, we are also part of another web—a web of interconnected people, organizations, and movements who are involved in resisting the PIC, and resisting racism and oppression in general. This resistance happens in small ways, every single day. It also happens in big, organized ways like protest movements and organizations. We find it inspiring that there are so many ways to get involved with prison solidarity—and we have only shared a few of them today.*
8. Ask people to go around and say one thing they are excited about doing in solidarity with prisoners or to challenge the PIC. If you want, keep holding on to the web for this part.