

(1.) *Would you be interested in submitting materials to train attendees?*

Yes.

(a.) *Would you like your name and contact information included?*

Yes.

My contact information is: Michael Zaharibu Dorrough, D-83611  
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Michael Zaharibu Dorrough, I am currently housed in the solitary confinement housing unit (SHU), at CSP-Corcoran. I have been housed in solitary confinement for the past 26 years, based on my being validated as a prison gang member. I have been incarcerated for 29 years.

I am an abolitionist, and I was a participant in each of the previous (3) hunger strikes, continue to be engaged in the work, including efforts in trying to contribute to coalition building, of changing the way CDCR does its business in warehousing of prisoners in solitary confinement; I'm in the hope of abolishing SHU housing units in it's entirety, or as we know it. I have contributed to writing several statements on this issue as a coordinator for the NCTT here at CSP-Corcoran.

(2.) This training is aimed primarily to focus on practical skills development for activists, legal workers, and lawyers to understand the nitty-gritty methods and best practices for supporting and advocating for people inside prisons.

(a.) *What skills should people work on developing?*

I must say, that because I believe that organizing coalition building is the critical first step to, successfully, challenging any injustice(s) those abolitionists, inside and out, must be on the same page in how they view an issue.

And, some of this does require a certain level of political maturity on as many of our part as possible (political maturity, I believe, makes it possible for us to be patient with each other, as well as being understanding of the space(s) that each of us is coming from.). Because many of us are engaged in different aspects of struggle, our development has taken place within that specific context (i.e. a nationalist, feminist, etc.). And that, I believe, has resulted in our forming alliances with, primarily, other activists/abolitionists who think and view the world through the same lenses as many of us do.

It is, in large part, why the activist community has developed so unevenly. Particularly over the last 25-30 years.

I believe that we must organize around, around correspondence, writing letters to legislatures, and other officials, media work, becoming familiar with certain rules and policies; and incorporating prisoner's rights into the activists/abolitionists struggle. We also believe that it is absolutely critical to our development that we take into account not only what the problem is, but also how we have and continue to be effected by that problem.

For example: We know what sexism/misogyny is, but the vast majority of men in the U.S., indeed on the planet, are clueless to how they/we have been effected by the legacy

of sexist/misogynistic man. We know what racism is but we don't appear to be mindful of how we have and continue to be affected by the legacy of slavery. We continue to define one another, (and it is usually unconsciously) according to criteria that is specifically developed to prevent us from recognizing the many things we have in common with one another.

And, we believe the most effective strategies must be based not only on what we know a particular problem to be, but on our recognition and understanding of how we have, and continue to be affected, collectively, by that problem; if we are to, permanently, rid ourselves, structurally, of the inhumanities that result, automatically, from it.

And naturally, this requires that we develop in ways that allow us to understand and accept that this is predicated on white-male supremacy/patriarchal authoritarianism.

(b.) *We plan to teach participants about basic rights and potential remedies within and external to CDCR. What should participants know about?*

We think, in particular, it must be understood that, within the CDCR, the administration, they have absolutely no respect at all for their own rules and policies. The *602 appeals process* is the only means to us to challenge the assaults on our humanity; it is really a pointless exercise. *602 appeals* are routinely denied, even in the face of overwhelming evidence; it is part of a deliberate effort to discourage us from even utilizing the institutional appeals process. We are required, as a matter of law, to exhaust all available administrative remedies, before we can proceed to court, but it is really a pointless process. We think that part of the problem is that there has been little outside support available to us that might compel this, and other similarly thinking prisons, to abide by their own rules, and to respect their own process.

One strategy that could prove effective might be, if a system can be established out there that would allow us to send *602 appeals* to activist, who would in turn, photocopy the *602* and then forward the original back to the appeals office at the prison; this could be done at each level of the appeal. (There are 3 levels: a 1<sup>st</sup>, then 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level reviews). Because this proposed process would make it possible for activists to, not only review the issue articulated in the appeal for its legitimacy, but also review this institution's reason for denying the appeal; implementing such a proposal would put the CDCR at risk of being exposed, again, for abuses of *602 appeal process*. As we have learned from these previous protests, our working and strategizing together to expose these unlawful practices can really have some very positive and lasting results.

(b.) *What forms or documents or policies should people be familiar with?*

Without question: the CDCR's, *Title 15, Departmental Operational Manual* (D.O.M) and *Operational Procedural Policy* (OPP).

Title 15 lays out the Rules and Regulations for the CDCR. Title 15 also included references to Case Law and Statutes, upon which the policies are based. (It is statutory) the (D.O.M.) is regulatory, and the (OPP) only applies to the specific prison from which it is issued.

Also, *CDC 602 Appeals* forms and citizen's complaint forms. As well as all policies that govern medical and mental care treatment. These are some forms, documents, and policies that we all should be familiar with.

(c.) *We plan to teach participants, “the nuts and bolts of: confidentiality, correspondence, visits, records requests, and re-entry”. What should participants know about these topics?*

We think that is important to know what the rules are on these issues. (As is relates to confidentiality, correspondence, visits, and records requests, the previously mentioned policies [see *section c.*] that does give detailed explanations on these topics.)

There are also sections in these policy documents on re-entry, but we think that establishing relationships with other, existing activists, who are involved in/with re-entry programs, would be great.

It really is necessary to know what the Rules and Regulations are governing these issues because in prisons like CSP-Corcoran, the administration has a tendency to interpret Rules and Regulations according to its interests at a given time. Knowing what the rules are puts one on an equal footing when asserting yourself should someone have to challenge an act of misconduct on part of the prison.

(d.) *What common mistakes do activists, legal workers, or attorneys make in trying to support people on the inside? How do you advise we corrects these mistakes?*

We honestly find it difficult to answer that question, at least at this time, because the previous rounds of protests showed that the activist community made some great adjustments throughout the protests for the mistakes that were made. They/You all were able to recognize a mistake, correct it, and develop a different strategy that put us in a position to succeed. Because the struggle is still ongoing, it's hard to say, at this time, what if any, mistake has been made (as it relates to suspending protest). And, depending on the kind of legislation that is actually signed into law, the jury is still out on whether or not that was a strategy that was well thought out.

Part of the problem is that there has to be more people who are committed to building a just and human society; and planet.

Injustice has had a head start on us all. And, we must fight ten-times as hard to defeat it now. There has simply not been enough to do the kind of work that must and has to be done, and as a result, we always find ourselves spread thin. It means that we have to pick and choose the battles that we fight; unfortunately some very crucial battles cannot be fought, nor even supported by the activist community outside.

That can and usually does, result in people feeling unwelcomed or unimportant. (We think it is important that we all be mindful, inside and outside, that these torture units have truly and genuinely damaged a lot of people. Many of us experience the pain of feeling unwelcomed routinely. It is really the nature of solitary confinement.)

(e.) *Why is it important for people to volunteer with programs present at the training —Human Rights Pen Pal Program, offering correspondence, California Prison*

*Focus offering legal visits to Corcoran and Pelican Bay SHU's, and Advocacy Network program advocating for people in solitary?*

Because,

“Another world is not only possible she is on her way:  
On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.”

~Arundhati Roy

To a Just and Humane society.

Struggling with you,

Zaharibu