

4
Solidarity across issues makes movements powerful. Without that connection, we end up undermining each other by competing for resources (e.g., volunteers, etc.). Mutual aid brings us together over shared needs and concerns (e.g., with cost of living), despite our different lived experiences.

2. mobilize people, expand solidarity, and build movements.
The consistent presence of mutual aid during sudden crises (e.g., fires, floods) shows how people band together to survive when the powers that be inevitably fall short.

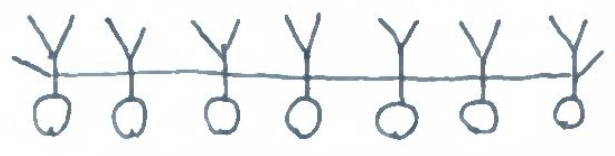
Three Key Elements of Mutual Aid

1. work to meet survival needs and build shared understanding about why people do not have what they need.
There is nothing new about mutual aid—people have worked together to survive for all of human history. But

capitalism and colonialism created structures that have disrupted how people have historically connected with each other and shared everything they needed to survive.

Mutual aid gives people a way to plug into movements based on their immediate concerns, and it produces social spaces where people grow new solidarities.

At its best, mutual aid actually produces new ways of living where people get to create systems of care and generosity that address harm and foster well-being.



By participating in groups in new ways and practicing new ways of being together, we are both building the world we want and becoming the kind of people who could live in such a world together.

3. solving problems through collective action rather than waiting for saviors.
Involvement in mutual aid projects teaches us how to take an active, decisive role in solving the issues we face. It also gives us opportunities to strengthen our collaboration skills.

Mutual aid is collective coordination to meet each other's needs, usually from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them. Those systems, in fact, have often created the crisis, or are making things worse.

EXAMPLE: Reliance on fossil fuels has led to climate change and extreme weather. When Helene hit, we didn't receive help from fuel companies. We received help from friends and strangers driving long distances to bring us generators and cans of gas from other cities.

These mutual aid projects directly meet people's survival needs, and are based on a shared understanding that the conditions in which we are made to live are unjust.

6
MADR asserts that by taking bold actions together, "we can imagine new ways of interacting with the world."
MADR asserts that by taking bold actions together, "we can imagine new ways of interacting with the world."
Disaster survivors themselves are the most important authority on just action.
for permission from authorities.
taking bold action without waiting and aftermath of disaster may require homes, and communities in the event
MADR asserts that "saving lives, a willingness to defy illegitimate authority.

Lessons from Mutual Aid Disaster Relief
Mutual aid can also generate boldness and a willingness to defy illegitimate authority.
MADR asserts that "saving lives, homes, and communities in the event and aftermath of disaster may require taking bold action without waiting for permission from authorities.
Disaster survivors themselves are the most important authority on just action.
MADR asserts that by taking bold actions together, "we can imagine new ways of interacting with the world."

What is Mutual Aid?

An introductory zine guide to caring for ourselves and others during these tumultuous times.

Exerpts from "Mutual Aid" by Dean Spade.

Enjoy. Copy. Share.

7
"Andacity is our capacity."
When a crew of MADR organizers (after Hurricane Maria) travelled to Puerto Rico (some visiting their families, others bringing medical skills), they found out about a government warehouse that was neglecting to distribute huge stockpiles of supplies. They showed their MADR badges to the guards and said, "We are here for the 8am pickup." When guards replied that their names were not on the list, they just insisted again, "We are here for the 8am pickup." They were eventually allowed in, told to take whatever they needed. After being let in once, aid workers were able to return repeatedly. They made more badges for local organizers, and this source continued to benefit local communities for months.

STORY TIME:

To learn more, check out the original text, "Mutual Aid—Building solidarity during this crisis (and the next)" by Dean Spade.

Want to provide and/or receive aid for/from your community? Search "mutual aid asheville" for info on hard-working, deeply caring groups in our area.

Stay safe