



## Rachael's Story

That was the start for me really, becoming really active, and really engaged, and really diving into working and being an activist around that kind of stuff. And really starting interventions and mediations... and started doing workshops at conferences and festivals of all different kinds—from environmental justice to whatever punk festivals, whatever, generally activists engage political, , wherever we could get a table out, or we could get a workshop space out. So talking about interventions, okay what is the community response to sexual assault—this is what we think is good, and you know how to support and survivor—here's mythology of sexual assault, here's various analysis that deconstruct that in very straight forward, friendly, nonacademic, non-formal language, in workshoping environments, and getting people to experiences and getting people to talk about their experiences of sexual violence and their lack of response, and their frustration, and feel our way through out own feelings in a way, and our own dislike of the justice system and institutional system which is very important—because for me I didn't want to—one, like my experience wasn't a prosecutable experience, with the structures of language and blah blah, blah. Two, I'm very afraid of going into that context and talking to police as a queer/freaky trans person, with people who are busting me for drugs, shutting down my squats, all these things, beating up my friends, are a threat, and a threat to like all these communities that I have to do with—migrant, indigenous communities, and people on the street. They didn't feel like a protection for me at all. Three, I didn't want to put this person to jail because I have enough love for him and I have enough love for everyone almost to not put them in jail because I don't believe in j—you know, it's very obvious for me.

So we were taking them out and talking to people about that, and going like,

“Okay so you guys sort of got all these politics but how do you connect that with this really immediate reality that like you're all suffering or bystanders of sexual violence, especially the women in your communities, in your activist communities, and your musical, cultural, communities, and blah, blah, blah, communities. But you're not talking about it, let alone sticking up for people, let alone supporting people and it's falling on these certain people every time—these women, these friends, you know, generally. And, in a more political way, there's no linking of say like colonialism and how violence works in, like, raced or colored communities with your activism.”

Like there's not a link and that's really bad, a real loss, and all these communities pulling apart and losing strength because the violence within them and the inability of people to even speak of their histories as children, or their relationship with Johnny Activist, who they're with at the time....

And we had a lose network of people in different cities who were publishing and trying to do that kind of stuff in different capacities—like writing about it and collecting stuff on restorative justice or groups, say, in the US who were working with that, or personal experiences of survivors—and, collating stuff. We were doing mediations on a very personal level—for friends and people who came to us because we were talking about it. It came to be bigger when there were conferences and stuff and there were definite situations in which someone violated someone and are both involved in this conference. And the community only knew and everything blew up—and everyone realized: *what a surprise*, that no one had any way of dealing with it, or had thought about it, or had talked about it at all. And we were like, “okay, like this is a chance to jumpstart





this thing,” because everyone’s like running around like chickens with their heads cut off and freaking out and bumping into each other.

And we were like, “okay we’re going to run workshops everyday at this thing and we’re going to talk—not about this exact event, but we’re going to talk about community responses and what’s wrong and what’s not happening. And we’re going to talk about our experiences as survivors; we’re going to give out all our resources...”

We formed a group that gave us, as a few core members the support and the strength we needed to keep doing interventions on a really personal level. Because when you’re doing that, you become very known for it, and just the way I would talk about it with people I met. I would talk about sexual violence and the work I was doing. And inevitably everyone would talk about their experiences, which is hard, but great.

