What is Occupy?

A worldwide movement dedicated to achieving an equitable, accessible, and sustainable way of life. We are against the current oppressive global system: a pervasive way of thinking, acting, and being rooted in the prosperity of interest groups, and the individual as passive. The Occupy movement works through a horizontal decision making process, and a principle of self-organizing to empower and educate people towards meaningful change. We use physical occupations to collaborate, and to show the kind of loving society that is possible. We use the power of ourselves, individuals-as-citizens, to assert and actualize our dreams of a better world.

What does it mean to have an Occupy mind-set?

Make sure you:

- Talk to everyone
- Avoid aggressive or oppressive body language, speech, or action
- Strive to understand your personal privileges, and work to adjust your use of space to allow space for others
- Recognize that when you are speaking, others are not
- Strive to continually work with, and not against, each other
- Consider the needs of the larger group in your decisions

Recognize that:

- Diversity in methods and persons is vital
- Decision-making is horizontal
- Individuals’ skills and thoughts have intrinsic value
- Collective consciousness should be developed

This means...

- Be mindful of one another: our shared intentions, and our different backgrounds and minds
- Allow each other the spaces we need to express ourselves
- Progressing ideas together; an idea is ready to be put into action once it has passed through individual and small group discussion, transcending its original form
- Share resources and knowledge
- Individual mindedness should be fostered

What is an Occupy Discussion?

An Occupy discussion is the first step, and must happen continually throughout the process. Its topics range from specific issues and their counterpart solutions to broader discussions on our future society, as well as the development and spread of the Occupy movement itself.

What is a Working Group?

A group that has come together and acknowledges that certain actions must be taken, then works together to realize them; keeping the interests of the larger collective in mind. Decisions reached by working groups that will affect the movement as a whole must be brought before the General Assembly for further discussion and approval.

What is a General Assembly?

This is where decisions effecting the larger group must be made; in other words, consensus decisions happen here. This includes changing or evolving the process, the creation of living documents, and the presentation and discussion of proposals. The process itself is different from site to site, but can consist of, and is not limited to: break-out groups with report backs on a specific subject; committee announcements and larger proposals; and discussions on those proposals, in the form of working groups or stacks, or using both working groups and stacks together.

What are some resources?

Most things Occupy: www.occupyto.org and www.occupytogether.org

Occupy Toronto Neighbourhoods - here to help you bring the Occupy conversation to your neighbourhood: occupytonighbourhoods@gmail.com
HAND SIGNALS

Passive Hand Signals
There are two passive hand signals that you can use to indicate how you are feeling about what is being discussed without using your voice.

1 Agree/Support - Twinkle Fingers
This indicates you are in support of what is being said. (fig. 1)

2 Disagree/Don’t Support - Tips of Fingers Touching
This indicates you are not in agreement with what is being said, but as it is a passive signal it means you don’t want to speak to your disagreement and you are also not blocking. (fig. 2)

Signals to Help Collective Facilitation

3 Point of Process - Raising a “P”
This means that we are not observing our process and we want to get back on track. (fig. 3)

4 Time Limit - Arm Rolling
This means that you want to remind a speaker that they have gone beyond the two minute time limit each speaker is supposed to have. (fig. 4)

Active Hand Signals

5 Want to Speak - Raising a Hand or Approaching the Stack Taker
This means you want to say something but you are deferring your speech by adding your name to a list (stack) of speakers. (fig. 5)

6 Direct Response/Point of Addition - Sign Language “A”
This means you want to respond directly or add on to what is being said. (fig. 6)

7 Point of Clarification - Raising a “C”
This is a question. Specifically, it means you want clarification on something the speaker is saying. (fig. 7)

8 Block - Arms in an “X”
This is used only with regard to proposals and means that you want to block consensus and the moving forward of the proposal because you cannot agree to it in its current form. A block should be followed up (if possible) with a constructive suggestion of how to change the proposal to make it agreeable (or at the very least a clear explanation of why you are blocking it). (fig. 8)

What does it mean to facilitate an Occupy discussion, working group, or General Assembly?
- Guide dialogue; aid the participants in progressing ideas together, and understanding commonalities
- Remain neutral; you can still have your voice heard, just make it clear that those statements are personal
- Encourage all voices to be heard, but do not force speech
- Ensure a respectful space, emphasizing active listening
- Listen more than you speak

How can you bring it to your community?
Host a discussion, it’s simple! Find a space, get the word out, and figure out your focus(es) and method(s) as a group. See resources for support.

www.occupyto.org