

THE TRAINING BACKPACK



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Brain Change provides training and intensives on organizing. Organizing is defined by Marshall Ganz as: "leadership that enables your people to turn their resources into the power they need to make the change they want." The Backpack is an organic, adaptable acceleration program with multiple components grounded in storytelling. The Backpack is a real-world, field-tested program informed by academic and popular theories and ideas from the robust ecosystem of English-speaking community organizing. Whether in labour organizing, the student movement, electoral campaigns, or issue-based campaigns - the Backpack has a host of best practices to offer in accelerating change and creating the change we want to see in the world. The Backpack is a living, breathing, organic set of teachings and best practices that are subject to fault, success, and evolution.

Learning Principles

All Brain Change education programs rely on a core set of learning principles.

- We commit to working in an anti-oppressive framework that recognizes multiple histories, lived experiences, languages, contexts, discriminations, abilities, systemic barriers, and indigeneity
- We commit to developing group norms for interacting with one another and holding each other accountable to those norms
- We commit to mutual accountability to create a space for learning that is challenging but does not recreate or reinforce barriers that affect our abilities to participate

This work is Open Source

Recognizing that many people involved in community organizing — especially women of colour — are uncredited for their work in organizing, it is inappropriate to take ownership of the ideas and learnings of others. This curriculum, its worksheets, and its content was assembled by Brian Chang, but Brain Change does not own the knowledge presented. Appropriate credits and citations are provided. This knowledge is provided with the intention that you share it with others, freely, adhering to the learning principles above. If you modify or change the content, feel free to notify Brian at bri@brianchang.ca. I'd love to see what you are working on with your teams.

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BRAIN CHANGE

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Components:

Organizing Campaigns

Being Inclusive

Sharing Your Stories

Coaching Leadership

Fostering Resilience

Nurturing Relationships

Building Teams

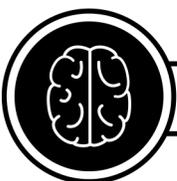
Developing Strategy

Setting Goals

Perceiving Power

Using Theory of Change

Choosing Actions



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Components in Detail

Organizing Campaigns

Description: An introduction to the idea of organizing, defined by Marshall Ganz of Harvard University - “Organizing is leadership that enables your people to turn their resources into the power they need to make the change they want.”

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illustrating the core components of organizing• Contrasting organizing against conventional mobilizing• Craft an organizing sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of identifying and describing organizing as a concept• Capable of articulating your organizing sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power• Points of Intervention• Mobilizing vs organizing• Ladder of Engagement• Organizing Sentence

Being Inclusive

Description: All disruptive work to change systems must come from a grounding in equity. Campaigns must constantly work to dismantle systems and processes of oppression. Learning how to critically approach the work you do through an equity-seeking lens is essential. The work of community organizing should build solidarity with many peoples. You’ll be introduced to critical ideas that challenge your current processes and work towards an inclusive model.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying different components of inclusion and their importance in organizing• Illustrating the core values that drive your work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of critically implementing inclusion into the daily work of organizing• Capable of using values to determine your personal core approaches to organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigeneity• Anti-Racism• Patriarchy• Anti-Harassment• Core Values• Speaking with/to/for



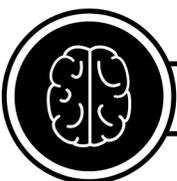
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Sharing Your Stories — Public Narrative

Description: Public Narrative is intentional storytelling to drive action. Humans fundamentally communicate using stories. All effective communication, verbal and non verbal, illustrates a desire to communicate (or not communicate) with others. Public Narrative is a structured approach to storytelling that situates stories in a context of self, us, and now. It is bringing a personal story forward, with the intention of sharing, and asking something specific of the listeners.

Case Study: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Zarqa Nawaz, Jagmeet Singh

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of illustrating a story of self, us, and now• Capable of identifying challenge, choice, and outcome components of their story of self• Capable of displaying values and emotions as part of the story of us• Capable of defining clear SMART actions as part of their story of now• Capable of identifying multiple actions depending on context (e.g., audience, campaign, theme, fundraising, volunteering, etc.)• Capable of incorporating the story of self, us, and now into a coherent public narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of delivering a 5-7 minute public narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Story of Self• The Story of Us• The Story of Now



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Coaching Leadership — Leaders don't Dictate

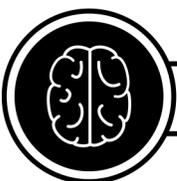
Description: A radical departure from typical top-down experiences of leadership, coaching recognizes and enforces a decentralized power model based on humility and a desire for constant growth without personalizing and demonizing fault, mistakes, and responsibility.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of listening to :1 feedback • Capable of responding to 1:1 feedback • Capable of providing 1:1 feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of peer coaching principles and able to execute and receive coaching • Capable of displaying empathy in story sharing 	

Fostering Resilience — The Work is Hard

Description: The challenges that your campaigns are attempting to change can be incredibly hard. Weathering can have sustained impacts on you and your team's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Knowing that people are your number one resource, there are ways in which you can build resilience amongst you and your teams to ensure sustainability and effectiveness, even under difficult and challenging circumstances.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of identifying and recognizing persistent challenges • Capable of using values as an exercise to maintain balance in difficult situations • Capable of identifying aspects of psychological flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying best practices from the presented materials that can be adapted to your own personal experiences in managing the difficulty of the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Flexibility, part of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy



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Nurturing Relationships — Relationships that Bind

Description: People are your number one resource, always. Organizing relationships require intentionality. Relationships are cultivated and grown; they can also wither, go dormant, or die. Knowing that people are core to your work, building effective working relationships with intentionality is essential to success. Good relationships are also just a lot more fun.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of identifying concepts of interests and resources and how they interact • Capable of contrasting different types of relationships • Capable of describing mutual responsibility • Capable of describing a ladder of engagement • Capable of identifying 1:1 tools for relationship building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying actions and components essential to effective organizing relationships • Knowing the ladder of engagement and applying it to your work • Differentiating the different types of 1:1 tools and when to use them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of relationships • Axiology • Ladder of Engagement • 1:1s

Building Teams

Description: There is so much work involved in campaigns. How you structure your team and develop it needs to be responsive to changing needs. Once relationships are established, you can do the work of ensuring that there are roles that meet the needs of your work and that these roles have core criteria to be successful. Building teams is different for every group, but there are core principles that are necessary in any functional team.

Case Study: Revolution Messaging

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of seeing different types of teams and connecting them to lived experiences • Capable of critically assessing the reasons why certain teams won't succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrating current structures with weaknesses and opportunities to implement a more robust structure using organizing principles • Identify problematic team dynamics or structures early-on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyranny of structurelessness • Sustainable relationship ratios • Mutual accountability • Clearly defined roles • Capacity for exponential growth



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Developing Strategy

Description: Strategy isn't something you just create and stick on a wall. Strategy starts with acknowledging that you have limited people and resources. How you prioritize and direct those resources and people will determine the longevity and sustainability of your work. Strategy is also knowing who the power players are and being able to articulate how your resources can be used to make the change you want to see in the world. Strategy is closely related and inseparable from the other components of Goals, Power, and Theory of Change.

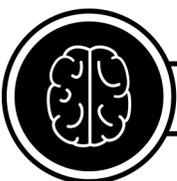
Case Study: We Own It

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of identifying key questions in developing a strategy• Capable of developing a strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding how to develop strategy and use it to direct and prioritize resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spectrum of Allies

Setting Goals

Description: Goals are functions of our interests. Our goals are what we want done. But we don't go from A-B in reaching goals. Goals are A-Z and every permutation in between. Our mountaintop goals are often unachievable, but we can work towards incremental goals that help make those goals a little more achievable. We aim for SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) goals in all our work. SMART goals allow us to think about what our goals are, and whether they are the beginning, midpoint, or end of the change we're trying to create.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of identifying SMART goals• Capable of separating larger goals into incremental ones• Capable of articulating a goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to identify goals and break them into incremental goals that help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nested goals• Mountaintop Goals• Spectrum of Allies



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Perceiving Power

Description: Deeply theoretical and extremely difficult to name, power is how all relationships between people operate. Recognizing that power comes in different forms, what are the ways in which power can be used to create the change we are trying to make. Power is a dynamic concept that is not static. Exploring what power is allows us to identify where to focus resources and energy in the most efficient way.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of differentiating different forms of power• Capable of differentiating people, ideas, and systems within power• Capable of determining which levels of power are at play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to effectively identify power structures affecting the campaign in order to leverage them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power With• Power Over• Levels of Power

Using Theory of Change

Description: This simple, yet challenging tool requires us to dig deep and interrogate whether we are in fact creating conditions for change. Mainly, Theory of Change asks why this strategy or action will be successful. We have to be able to articulate why we are willing to put our resources towards these actions. Is there a realistic connection between the actions, the people, and the goals.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of using theory of change• Capable of differentiating the three sections of the theory of change, [if, then & because]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to craft multiple theories of change to meet the goals of the campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action• Outcome• Reasoning



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Choosing Actions

Description: What do we want to do with the resources you have? What actions are there that you can take that will help solidify your position, use your strategy to prioritize your resources and work towards your goals. We'll analyze different types of actions using the concept of the "sweet spot" and build out a campaign timeline of actions.

Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Sub-Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capable of proposing a host of ideas for different types of actions• Capable of identifying different actions• Capable of conducting a sweet spot analysis• Capable of developing a campaign timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to critically analyze actions• Able to plot actions in a strategic manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct Action• Sweet Spot Analysis• Campaign Timeline

