Psychological Dimensions of Civic Action

Psychological and Sociological training module

EnviRights

Empowering eNVIronmental RIGHTS defenders through monitoring, capacity building and advocacy in Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

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OBJECTIVES

Strengthen the protection of the right to freedom of association, expression, and assembly in the context of environmental activism, particularly among young people, in line with Articles 11 and 12 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The project (lasting 24 months) aims to:

- improve the monitoring of rights violations against environmental activists;
- strengthen the awareness, resilience, and response capacity of people active in environmental movements;
- promote a more constructive dialogue among activists, public authorities, media, and policymakers;
- counter derogatory or criminalizing narratives targeting peaceful climate activism.

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PARTNERSHIP

The project involves a transnational partnership made up of **7 organizations from 5 EU countries,** with complementary expertise in volunteering, research, legal protection, environmental activism, youth participation, local governance, and European advocacy.

- Volontariato Torino ETS (Italy)
- Università degli Studi di Torino (Italy)
- Green Legal Impact (Germany)
- Environmental Management and Law Association (Hungary)
- Hellenic Youth Participation (Greece)
- Municipality of Érd (Hungary)
- ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy (France)



MAIN ACTIVITIES

Research, mapping and monitoring

Main outputs:

- Environmental activism rights monitoring system;
- Monitoring report;
- Digital platform for reporting violations.

Capacity building, communication and advocacy

- **Training pathway on the legal, communicative, psychological, and sociological aspects of environmental activism.**
- **Strengthening skills in resilience, conflict management, communication, and rights protection.**
- Awareness-raising for journalists and media professionals.

Main outputs:

- **Training programme;**
- Communication kit;
- Recommendations paper.

Why a Psychological Training Module?

- Activism doesn't fail from lack of conviction: it fails under pressure, when reaction replaces strategy.
- Four high-stakes moments: the street, the negotiating table, the organisation, the media narrative.
- Each is shaped by known psychological dynamics: escalation, negotiation asymmetry, burnout, self-censorship.
- Naming these dynamics turns risk into skill and protects activists, movements, and their impact.

An overview of the training session ahead

Today's Agenda

- **Introduction** — 5 min
- **Module 01** — Reading the Room — 40 min
- **Module 02** — Playing the Long Game — 45 min
- *Break — 5 min*
- **Module 03** — Staying in the Fight — 40 min
- **Module 04** — Know Your Ground — 40 min
- **Final Wrap-Up** — Closing Reflection, Objectives Review & Questions — 15 min

TOTAL — 190 min (~ 3 hours)

MODULE 01

Reading the Room

Conflict Dynamics Between Movements and the Police

Why This Matters

- Without understanding how crowd (police interactions escalate, activists default to reactive patterns, shouting, freezing, closing ranks) that accelerate the very confrontation they fear.
- Procedural movements are misread as aggression; activist spontaneity is misread as pre-planned provocation.
- The result: mutual escalation that harms participants, damages the movement's public image, and gives authorities a pretext for restriction.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the stages of the escalation cycle in a crowd–police interaction and locate the intervention window at each stage.
- Apply at least one de-escalation technique in a simulated scenario.
- Distinguish between asserting rights and provoking confrontation.
- Coordinate a de-escalation response within a small group without a designated leader.

Theory

Escalation Cycle

- Contact — Friction — Threshold — Incident.

Procedural Justice

- Tyler & Huo (2006)

Social Identity & Dynamic Categorisation

- Tajfel & Turner (1979); Stott & Drury (2000)

The Liaison Role

- Stott et al., (2012)

The Escalation Cycle

Contact → Friction → Threshold → Incident each stage has a characteristic dynamic and a window for interruption.

1. **Contact:** the neutral first encounter.
2. **Friction:** small frustrations accumulate on either side.
3. **Threshold:** either side starts reading the other's behaviour as hostile intent rather than situational reaction.
4. **Incident**: open confrontation.

Intervening earlier in the cycle is always easier than de-escalating after Incident.

IN PRACTICE

Recall a recent action and map it onto these four stages ⟶ most groups can locate the exact moment of Threshold in hindsight.

Most interventions fail because they are attempted at Incident, when options have already narrowed to confrontation or retreat.

The same framework applies to online escalation ⟶ comment threads and callout dynamics, not only physical crowds.

Procedural Justice

(*Tyler & Huo, 2002*)

- Cooperation with authority depends less on the outcome than on whether people felt heard, treated with dignity, and given reasons.
- Requesting fair process is leverage, not submission.
- **Four components**:

1. **Voice** (heard before a decision), 2. **Neutrality** (transparent, consistent rationale), 3. **Respect** (dignified treatment regardless of outcome), 4. **Trustworthy motives** (a sense authority is acting in good faith).
   Asking for the reason behind an order invokes all four at once, at low cost.

IN PRACTICE

Example: Police who explain why a march is being rerouted see far less resistance than police who give no reason, even for an identical outcome.
The same logic applies inside activist groups: a decision process that ignores voice, neutrality, respect, or trustworthy motives breeds internal resentment, regardless of the decision itself.

Procedural justice is not about being right, a wrong decision, reached fairly, is often accepted better than a correct one imposed without explanation.

Social Identity & the Flashpoint Dynamic

(*Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Stott & Drury, 2000)*

In a crowd, people shift from individual to group identity

- Force against a sub-group re-categorises the whole crowd as under threat.
- Flashpoints are identity-driven, not danger-driven.
- Once the shift happens, force used against one sub-group is experienced by the whole crowd as an attack on ‘us’, previously uninvolved bystanders may join the confrontation.

IN PRACTICE

Stott & Drury's studies of the 1990 UK ‘poll tax riot’ showed indiscriminate policing turning a small protest into a mass confrontation within minutes.
The same dynamic explains why a single officer's aggressive move can turn an entire peaceful crowd hostile, even though most of the crowd never interacted with that officer.

Implication: uniform, non-targeted crowd management preserves the many individual identities in a crowd; indiscriminate force collapses them into one.

Realistic Group Conflict Theory

(Sherif, 1966)

Inter-group conflict intensifies under perceived competition for scarce resources (space, legitimacy, authority).

- Naming the structural frame helps participants recognise that hostility is situational, and therefore interruptible.
- Cooperation toward a shared superordinate goal reliably reduces the same hostility, the competition, not the group itself, is the driver.

IN PRACTICE

Sherif's original 'Robbers Cave' experiments showed that competing for a prize was enough to create real fights between previously friendly boys within days.

Applied to activism: attention, legitimacy, and public space are often perceived as zero-sum, even when they are not.

A shared superordinate goal (even with a former opponent group) can rapidly dissolve manufactured hostility.

The Liaison Role

(Stott, Hoggett & Pearson, 2012; Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

- Structured, equal-status contact between representatives of opposing groups reduces inter-group hostility.

The liaison interrupts the feedback loop by which a crowd becomes what authority treats it as

- Conditions for success: equal status within the contact, a shared goal, active cooperation rather than passive coexistence, and support from an authority or institution.

IN PRACTICE

The role mirrors real-world ‘protest liaison officers’ and community mediators already used in many jurisdictions.

Contact theory explains why it works: repeated, structured contact under equal-status conditions builds trust that spontaneous confrontation cannot.

A liaison who over-identifies with either side loses credibility with the other, perceived neutrality is part of the job, not just actual neutrality.

Activity: Liaison Simulation

- **Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Format:** groups of 6 — 3 activists, 2 police, 1 observer
- **Objective:** experience and name the moments at which tension rises or falls in a crowd–police interaction, and identify what a liaison can do structurally to interrupt escalation.

Scenario

A **police supervisor** approaches an activist group: a side street must be cleared within ten minutes for emergency vehicle access.
Activists suspect a pretext.
The **observer** records without intervening.

1. **Pick a role card and set up:** two facing rows of chairs; observer seated to the side with the observation sheet (5 min)
2. **Activists protect the action without physical escalation**; police clear the street without arrests; observer notes every moment tension rises and what reduces it. (15 min)
3. **Plenary debrief** (10 min)

Debrief

- **At what point did tension rise and what specifically changed it?**
- **Where have you seen this escalation pattern in real actions you have been part of?**
- **What is one thing your group would do differently in an actual police–crowd interaction?**

The liaison function is not a concession: it is a strategy.

Key Takeaways

- *Conflict between activists and police is usually structural before it is personal which means it can be interrupted structurally.*
- *Requesting fair process is a tactical move, not a moral one.*
- *One designated liaison changes the dynamics of an entire crowd interaction.*
- *Knowing where you are on the escalation ladder is the first step to choosing a different direction.*

One Concrete Action

Designate a liaison before your next action.
Give them a brief: explain, don't justify; stay calm, don't submit.

MODULE 02

Playing the Long Game

Strategic Dialogue with Authorities

Why This Matters

- Without skills in institutional dialogue, activists either avoid formal engagement (ceding the field) or enter it naively and leave disillusioned.
- Movements then oscillate between exclusion and co-optation, missing the difficult middle ground where real negotiation happens.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the structural asymmetries in activist–authority dialogue (information, legitimacy, time) and name at least two strategies to counteract them.
- Apply interests-based negotiation (BATNA; interests vs. positions) to a realistic meeting scenario.
- Recognise the difference between legitimate institutional engagement and co-optation.
- Prepare a collective meeting strategy in under thirty minutes.

Theory

BATNA

- Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1991

Interests vs. Positions

- Positions are demands; interests are the needs behind them.

Three Sources of Power

- VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002

Co-optation vs. Legitimate Engagement

Agonistic Pluralism

- Mouffe, 2000

BATNA

(*Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1991)*

Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement: what you will do if dialogue fails.
Prepared explicitly, in writing, before each significant meeting.
A group that has not worked out its BATNA in advance tends to overvalue whatever is offered in the room, simply because it has nothing else to compare it to.

IN PRACTICE
Example: a union with no strike fund and no backup plan will accept nearly any offer, because its no-agreement alternative is so weak.
A strong BATNA can come from many sources (media leverage, a pending legal case, allied organisations, public opinion) not only the ability to escalate.

Writing the BATNA down forces honesty about what the group will actually do, vague threats collapse under real pressure.

Interests vs. Positions

Positions are demands; interests are the needs behind them.

- Working from interests opens solution space without softening demands.
- Ask **‘why do you need that?**’ rather than only ‘what do you want?’

IN PRACTICE

Classic illustration: two people argue over one orange: one demands the whole thing (position), but only needs the peel for zest, while the other only needs the juice, a solution invisible at the position level.
An activist group's public ‘position’ is often shaped by messaging needs, and may differ from what would actually satisfy the group privately.

Working from interests does not mean compromising the goal: it means finding out what the goal actually is.

Three Sources of Power

(VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002)

- **Formal** — institutional authority.
- **Relational** — coalitions, access.
- **Narrative** — who frames the story.

Mapping all three, explicitly and concretely, is the antidote to assumed weakness.

IN PRACTICE

Formal power without narrative power can lose in the court of public opinion even after winning the legal argument.

Narrative power without formal power can shift culture, yet see no formal policy commitments follow.

Coalitions (relational power) often multiply a group's perceived formal power simply by expanding who is in the room.

Co-optation vs. Legitimate Engagement

Engagement is legitimate when the movement retains both its capacity to escalate and its accountability to those it represents.

Co-optation is recognised less by its intentions than by its effects: a movement quietly trades away one of the two, and only notices once both are already gone.

IN PRACTICE

Historic pattern: advisory boards created after protests that meet regularly but hold no decision authority are a textbook co-optation structure.

A useful test: **‘if we walked away today, would anything actually change?’** If the answer is no, the engagement may already be hollowed out.

Legitimate engagement usually leaves a visible trace , a policy change, a resource commitment, a binding timeline.

Agonistic Pluralism

(Mouffe, 2000)

Dialogue and the capacity to escalate are not opposites — they are levers used in combination. A movement that only ever escalates, or only ever dialogues, tends to lose leverage over time.

IN PRACTICE

Mouffe's argument: healthy democracy needs adversaries who accept each other's legitimacy, not enemies to be eliminated but it does need real contest, not false consensus.

Movements that abandon confrontation entirely risk being absorbed without gaining anything (see co-optation above).

Movements that abandon dialogue entirely risk permanent marginalisation, and lose potential allies inside institutions

Activity: The Twenty-Minute Meeting

- **Duration:** 35 minutes
- **Format:** groups of 4 — 2 activists, 1 official, 1 observer
- **Objective:** practice institutional dialogue under realistic asymmetries and surface the difference between positions and interests.

Scenario

An **environmental coalition** has twenty minutes with a transport authority official to halt or alter a construction project.
The **official** is under schedule pressure and has limited discretion.
The **activists** arrive with data, proposals, and stories.

1. Each of the partecipant **pick a role card and activists meet separately to complete the worksheet:** objective, interests, BATNA, red line, roles. The official and observer read their cards in parallel (5 min)
2. **Twenty-minute meeting** runs in real time. The observer notes turning points and any moves toward or away from interests (20 min)
3. **Plenary debrief** (10 min). Observers report first (what turning points they logged), then open with the prompts above. Protect this time in full; do not compress it to save time elsewhere.

Debrief

- **Where did your group's position differ from its interest and what would have changed if you had led with the interest?**
- **What was the official's interest under their stated position?**
- **Where was the zone of agreement that neither side reached and what prevented it?**

Institutional engagement is not the opposite of pressure it is part of how pressure becomes traction.

Key Takeaways

- *The room is asymmetric by design. Recognising the asymmetry is the first counter-move.*
- *BATNA strengthens the position before the conversation begins.*
- *Interests, not positions, open the zone of agreement.*
- *Co-optation is recognised by its effects: loss of escalation capacity and accountability.*

One Concrete Action

Before your next institutional meeting, complete a preparation brief: objectives, BATNA, interests behind positions, and who in the room is most likely to move.

MODULE 03

Staying in the Fight

Building and Sustaining Activist Resilience

Why This Matters

- Without resilience-building practices, activist groups treat burnout as individual failure rather than a structural problem, producing high turnover, loss of institutional memory, and a progressive narrowing of who can sustain participation.
- The strategic question is not why people burn out, but where resources are going and how they are being replenished.

Learning Objectives

- Name at least three psychological and social risk factors specific to activist burnout, and distinguish them from ordinary fatigue.
- Apply a structured self-assessment protocol to evaluate their own resilience indicators.
- Identify at least two group-level practices that protect collective resilience over time.
- Respond constructively when a colleague shows signs of burnout without pathologising or dismissing.

Theory

Burnout
- Chen & Gorski, 2015; Lord et al., 2025; Maslach, 2003

Conservation of Resources
- Hobfoll, 1989; 2011

Moral Injury
- Shay, 1994; VanderWeele, 2025

Post-Traumatic Growth
- Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Henson et al., 2021

Collective Resilience
- Masten, 2001; Norris et al., 2008

Burnout

(Chen & Gorski, 2015; Lord et al., 2025; Maslach, 2003)

Chronic exhaustion, cynicism, reduced efficacy.
Distinct from acute fatigue in its persistence and erosion of meaning.

An exhausted activist who still believes in the cause is tired; a burnt-out activist starts to doubt whether any of it matters.

IN PRACTICE
The three classic burnout dimensions (Maslach): exhaustion, cynicism/depersonalisation, and reduced sense of accomplishment.

A vacation alone rarely resolves burnout if the underlying resource drain continues on return.

The warning sign most often missed is growing cynicism about the cause itself, not just tiredness with the work.

Conservation of Resources

(Hobfoll, 1989; 2011)

Stress arises from loss or threatened loss of resources, energy, relationships, status, material conditions, meaning.
Activist contexts deplete multiple categories simultaneously.

'Loss spirals': once a resource starts being depleted, each subsequent loss becomes more likely and more damaging.

IN PRACTICE

Hobfoll's key insight: people are more sensitive to losing a resource than to gaining an equivalent one loss looms larger than gain.

The 'resource caravan': some resources travel together, so losing sleep, for instance, often costs relationships too, which is why campaigns can spiral quickly.
Building reserves before a crisis makes the eventual loss less catastrophic when it comes.

Moral Injury

(Shay, 1994; VanderWeele, 2025)

Damage to meaning, not energy

- Arises from acting against deeply held values, or witnessing injustice one cannot prevent.
- Requires acknowledgment, moral repair, and community witness — not rest alone.

IN PRACTICE

Originally described in combat veterans; increasingly applied to activists, healthcare workers, and humanitarian aid workers.

Common triggers in activism: being unable to stop a harm you had some power over, or compromising a principle under organisational pressure.

Unlike burnout, moral injury does not respond to rest, it requires acknowledgment and, where possible, repair or restitution.

Post-Traumatic Growth

(Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Henson et al., 2021)

Under specific conditions (social support, narrative processing, a meaning framework) adversity produces growth.

- Movements can deliberately create these conditions, or inadvertently destroy them.

IN PRACTICE

Growth does not mean the adversity was good, it means new strength, perspective, or connection can coexist with real harm.

The three enabling conditions (support, narrative processing, meaning framework) can be deliberately built into after-action rituals.

Groups that skip debriefs entirely lose the chance for this narrative processing to happen at all.

Collective Resilience

(Masten, 2001; Norris et al., 2008)

An emergent property of the group, built through deliberate practices rather than individual toughness.

Rotating workload, protected rest periods, and structured check-ins all matter — independent of who the individual members are.

IN PRACTICE

Resilience is often wrongly treated as an individual trait built through willpower: this theory reframes it as a group design problem.

Practical levers: rotating high-burnout roles, protected rest after major actions, structured celebration of wins, even small ones.

Groups with strong collective resilience recover faster after setbacks, they do not simply avoid setbacks.

Activity: Designing Collective Care

- **Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Format:** groups of 4–5, applied to their own organisations
- **Objective:** move resilience from an individual frame to an organisational one; produce one concrete, implementable practice per group.

Scenario

A movement organisation has just completed a difficult campaign.
Three people have reduced their involvement; nobody has formally acknowledged this.
The group is about to plan the next campaign.

1. **Distribution of resource maps** and explaination of the six resource circles and Individual silent mapping. (5 min)
2. **Take a collective care practice cards** (rotating load, mandatory rest periods, structured check-ins, celebration practices, failure processing protocols). **Groups design one concrete practice for their actual organisational context:** who does what, when, how often, who holds it accountable (10 min)
3. **Groups presentation** to one another and **Plenary debrief** (15 min)

Debrief

- **What did your group design, and what assumption about your organisation did you have to challenge to make it realistic?**
- **Where have you seen resilience built, or destroyed, in activist groups you have been part of?**
- **What is one thing you will propose to your organisation in the next two weeks?**

The practices you designed are political acts. They determine who can stay in the movement, and for how long.

Key Takeaways

- *Burnout is a resource depletion problem, systemic, not personal, and preventable.*
- *Moral injury targets meaning, not energy, it requires different repair than ordinary tiredness.*
- *Collective resilience is built through deliberate practices, not through individual toughness.*
- *Sustainable activism is a political choice.*

One Concrete Action

Name and commit to one collective care practice from today's session and identify who in your organization will hold it accountable.

MODULE 04

Know Your Ground

The *Legal and Strategic Limits of Peaceful Dissent*

Why This Matters

- Without a shared framework for the boundaries of peaceful dissent, activist groups either over-censor themselves out of uninformed fear, or escalate without strategic intent, both patterns serve those who wish to narrow civic space.
- Pre-action indecision is often not strategic disagreement, but the absence of a shared analytical tool.

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish the legal definition of peaceful assembly from political and media definitions, and explain why they differ.
- Identify conditions under which civil disobedience has historically produced change without triggering disproportionate repression.
- Apply a tactic assessment framework to evaluate the legal, strategic, and reputational dimensions of specific protest actions.
- Name and resist the psychological mechanisms of self-censorship operating within activist groups.

Theory

Peaceful Assembly
- ICCPR Art. 21 and ECHR Art. 11

Civil Disobedience
- Rawls, 1971

Strategic Nonviolence
- Sharp, 1973; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011

Self-Censorship & Psychological Reactance
- Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Brehm, 1966; Earl & Soule, 2010

The Framing Contest
- Entman, 1993; Snow et al., 1986; Boykoff, 2006

Peaceful Assembly

Legal standard: collective expression without violence against persons

Under ICCPR Art. 21 and ECHR Art. 11, property disruption and civil disobedience may still fall within protected assembly.

Political and media definitions of 'peaceful' are routinely narrower than the legal one: groups that internalise the media definition self-censor beyond what the law actually requires.

IN PRACTICE

The legal threshold is deliberately narrow: only violence against persons removes protection not disruption or inconvenience.

Courts in multiple jurisdictions have upheld protection for sit-ins, blockades, and civil disobedience under this broader reading.

Media and political rhetoric routinely conflate 'disruptive' with 'violent', legally, they are not the same category.

Civil Disobedience

(Rawls, 1971)

Deliberate, non-violent violation of law, publicly avowed, accepting legal consequences.
Distinct from ordinary law-breaking in its public, principled character.

The point is not to escape consequences, but to make an injustice visible through willing acceptance of them.

IN PRACTICE
Historic examples: Thoreau's night in jail, Gandhi's Salt March, the Greensboro sit-ins — all involved openly accepting arrest, not evading it.

Rawls' framing: civil disobedience appeals to the community's sense of justice, which is why publicity and restraint matter as much as the act itself.

Strategic Nonviolence

(Sharp, 1973; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011)

Nonviolent movements erode the institutional pillars of an unjust system through strategic withdrawal of cooperation.

Empirically, nonviolent campaigns succeed roughly twice as often as violent ones. Largely because they mobilise a broader base of participants, the argument is strategic, not solely moral.

IN PRACTICE

Chenoweth & Stephan's '3.5% rule': no campaign that mobilized at least 3.5% of the population failed to achieve its stated aims.

Nonviolent campaigns lower the personal cost of participation: no need for physical risk-taking or specialized training, which is why they mobilize more broadly.

Repression against nonviolent movements is more likely to backfire ('political jiu-jitsu'), turning bystanders into sympathizers.

Self-Censorship & Psychological Reactance

(Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Brehm, 1966; Earl & Soule, 2010)

Two opposite mechanisms operate simultaneously: pre-emptive suppression and radicalisation under perceived threat.
'Spiral of silence': **self-censorship out of fear of isolation.**
Psychological reactance: increased, sometimes escalatory resistance when people perceive a threat to their freedom of action.

IN PRACTICE
The spiral of silence means people who believe their view is a minority opinion often silence themselves, which then makes that view genuinely appear rarer than it is.
Reactance explains why a heavy-handed ban on a tactic can paradoxically increase its appeal and adoption.

Both mechanisms operate largely outside conscious awareness, naming them explicitly is often the only way to counteract them in a planning meeting.

The Framing Contest

(Entman, 1993; Snow et al., 1986; Boykoff, 2006)

Whether an action is labelled ‘violent’ or ‘peaceful’ is contested politically and in media, not only legally.

Communication strategy is inseparable from tactical planning.

IN PRACTICE

Entman's definition: framing means selecting some aspects of reality and making them more salient, to promote a particular interpretation.

The same action (blocking a road) can be framed as ‘reckless criminality’ or ‘citizens forced to extraordinary measures’, depending entirely on framing choices made in advance.

Movements that do not prepare their framing in advance cede that ground to opponents and media by default.

Activity: The Tactic Assessment Matrix

- **Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Format:** groups of 5, applied to a fictional scenario
- **Objective:** replace reactive tactic discussions with a structured analytical procedure; surface and contain self-censorship dynamics.

Scenario

A tenant rights coalition is planning an action against a property developer.
Options: a permitted march; an unpermitted flash mob; a two-hour office blockade; a social media campaign exposing investors.
The group has three days to decide.

1. **Distribution** of the legal framework summary cards and **explaination of the five matrix columns**: legal exposure / escalation risk / media framing risk / third-party activation / reversibility (5 min)

2. Groups
- **complete the matrix for all four tactics**.
- **produce a recommendation and a brief defence** *('Who is most uncomfortable with this recommendation, and why?')* (10 min)

1. Cross-group challenge and **plenary debrief** (15 min).

Debrief

- **Where did your matrix assessment differ most from your initial intuition and what does that tell you about how your group currently makes tactic decisions?**
- **Where have you seen self-censorship operate in groups you have been part of and what did it cost the campaign?**
- **What would your organisation need to change to make better tactic decisions together?**

The space of legitimate protest is always contested. The task is not to find a safe space within it, but to know exactly where you are standing and why.

Key Takeaways

- *The legal definition of peaceful assembly is broader than most activists assume and narrower than most authorities apply.*
- *Self-censorship limits movement effectiveness beyond what law requires.*
- *Strategic nonviolence is a tool, not a moral position, it works when it expands coalition and constrains repression.*
- *Framing is part of the action: communication strategy is inseparable from tactical planning.*

One Concrete Action

Before your next planned action, run the tactic assessment matrix as a group.
Treat disagreements as data, not as conflict to resolve.

CLOSING REFLECTION

All four modules address the same underlying question:

how do activists build enough strategic awareness to act deliberately rather than reactively, in the street, in the meeting room, in their own organisations, and in the framing war?

Strategic composure is not passivity; it is the difference between a movement that shapes events and one that merely responds to them.

Summary of Concrete Actions

- **Module 01 –** Designate a liaison before your next action. Brief them: explain, don't justify; stay calm, don't submit.
- **Module 02** ⟶ Complete a preparation brief before the next institutional meeting: objectives, BATNA, interests behind positions, and who in the room is most likely to move.
- **Module 03** ⟶ Name and commit to one collective care practice, and identify who in your organisation will hold it accountable.
- **Module 04** ⟶ Run the tactic assessment matrix as a group before the next planned action. Treat disagreements as data.

Questions

What is still unclear?
What would you most like to revisit before we finish?

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Thanks for your attention!

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UPCOMING EVENTS