

PREVENTION JUSTICE SEMINAR**Community Organizing and Activism****By James Mumm (co-director Mothers on the Move)**

- A 'Community' can be anything – a community of people with AIDS, a community of white people, and community of people of colour, etc...

Question from speaker to participants: What happens if we don't build power?**Answers from participants:**

- Other people make decisions for you
- You have no power
- You are ineffective
- What's the point of voting?
- It's great to have power!
- Power feels good

Question from speaker: Give some examples of times when you felt powerful:**Answers from participants:**

- When you run for class president and you win – you feel euphoric and it just escalates from there.
- At the age of 20 years old I was one of four advisers to my country's prime minister
- When I was voted onto an advisory board by the clients of an organization, not the staff.
- Learning and graduating – knowledge is my power!
- When I won my court case as my own attorney.

Question from Speaker: If we win something it's addictive in a good way! Give some examples of victories through people power:**Answers from participants:**

- When we got out of Vietnam
- P.W. 49
- All people in this room doing what they're doing...taking care of themselves and doing for others. Young and old out there fighting.

Speaker continued:

Victories of power can be

- 1) Personal
- 2) Policy
- 3) Law - i.e. how society is governed

Question from speaker: Give some examples of bad use of power:

Answers from participants:

- Manipulation
- Using power over people
- When the president can audit you if you disagree with his policies

Speaker continued:

- When people have meaningless power this is called 'tokenism'
- Power with people is the key – not power over people.
- The secret of organizing is the concept of 'self interest'
- You can't ask someone to join an organization unless you understand their self-interests – they have their own priorities.

Question from speaker: list some of the things you spend money on:

Answers from participants:

- Children
- Bills
- Cleaning
- Health
- Relationships
- Education
- Career
- Recreation
- Pets
- Drugs
- Sex
- Escapism
- TV/DVDs

Speaker continued:

- Once you understand your self-interests and others' self interests then you can build an organization and try to change other peoples' self interests.
- You must not treat each other as clients but as equals.

Question from participant:

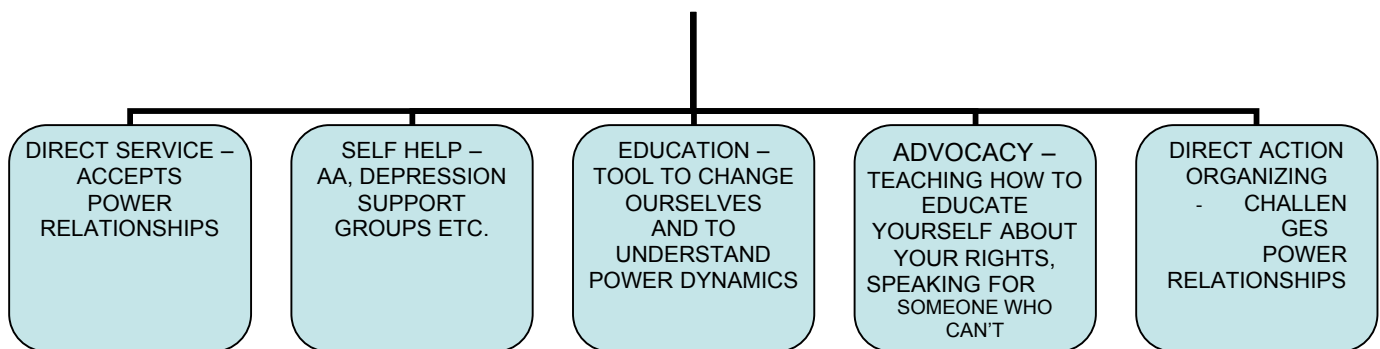
But what if you join an organization, you love it and you stretch yourself too thin?

Answer from speaker:

You have to be careful, time is limited, you must look at how you spend your time and energy.

FORMS OF COMMUNITY

ORGANIZING - DIAGRAM



Speaker Continued:

- Victories of power are concrete, Immediate and Real

Question from speaker: Give some examples of wins you would like to happen

Answers from participants:

- Federal funding for needles exchange
- Housing for the homeless
- Eliminating ADAP waiting lists