The PIC wants us to believe that police, prisons, and surveillance are necessary to maintain the social order. What could “safe spaces” or “early intervention” look like? What is the importance, how can we sustain them once the PIC is abolished?

**Bench & Jenna, Philly Stands Up:** As it is now, safe spaces tend to function as bubbles designed to stave off folks without anti-oppression politics or to respond to people who have perpetuated assault and have not been accountable. Although necessary, the establishment of safer spaces often feels watery, fraught, and tenuous. Safer spaces do, however, ask participants to act with awareness and intention around harm, violence, and risk. How do we transform these temporary spaces into a lasting framework for what we can and do expect of each other? PIC abolition is about establishing safety so that instead of policing difference in the name of safe communities, safety means celebrating, acknowledging, and working through and with difference. All of these spaces are obligations of self-determination as a central organizing principle of the world we wish to create and inhabit.

Since our current models of safer spaces can sometimes replicate the policing and surveillance we need to dismantle, it is critical that we find ways to maintain a community with each other without connecting our safety to somebody else’s exile. Part of this work means developing a culture of self-care with each other and having high expectations for how we treat each other. Transformative justice highlights the need for placing at the center of our political practice a dedication towards developing (re)new(ed) modes of communicating with each other that are grounded in abundance, accountability, and love. Our movements and our political and personal relationships cannot afford to continue down the road of “call out culture,” where we overemphasize the role of critique at the expense of generative political conversations that allow for growth. Creating abolitionist visions of safety, then, is about challenging ourselves to understand liberation as collective and accountability as community-wide.

**Morgan Bassichis, CUAV:** Generations of white supremacy and capitalism have deeply disturbed our communal understanding of safety. The PIC teaches us that “safety” is a commodity—something that we come to believe can be given, taken away, valued, or devalued. And we internalize and embody this understanding—“you make me feel unsafe, that’s an unsafe neighborhood, we need someone to keep us safe”—as if safety is something that is dictated to us. We do not yet think about “safety” as a self-generating process over time that is impacted by external conditions but not dictated by them. We will not look to people, spaces, policies, or institutions to “make us safe” but instead look to the resources that rest in ourselves and our communities that can decrease our vulnerability to harm and increase our ability to make grounded choices that will foster our wellness. Some of these resources include being able to have loving, direct conversations, being able to ask ourselves and others open-ended questions instead of assuming we already know the answer, and being able to center ourselves in intense times. We will see fostering safety as a shared practice that we are all in together, not a destination or set recipe. We will come to understand safety less as a product and more as localized experiments in interdependence.

Once we abolish the PIC, we will need to continue to address the trauma the PIC has caused our communities. What are some strategies and approaches we can use to respond to this trauma & promote mental, physical, and emotional health?

**Bench & Jenna, Philly Stands Up:** After the PIC is abolished, there is a right of the vulnerable that are often ushered in after collective or individual trauma by finding ways to productively hold the memories of trauma and consequences of it into the ways stories are told so that the remembrances are made. We can learn from our empowered legacies of trauma and build cultures of resistance out of our collective traumas that have afflicted us. It is important to name, celebrate, and sometimes mourn the tools of survival that those most directly targeted by the PIC have developed. Equally necessary is cultivating the discernment to determine when those survival strategies—such as not being able to communicate our needs or trust our neighbors—may need to be discarded. There is so much to learn by asking how we got here. These inspiring and often tragic legacies that ground us in our own vibrant history of struggle cannot be overlooked when we live in a world free from prisons.

**RI Maccan & Gaurav Jashnani, Challenging Male Supremacy Project:** We need to cultivate resilience, our capacity to bounce back from trauma and oppression. This could come in the form of talking, singing, praying, or dancing together. What are our ways of coming together that feed our resilience? What are our ways of coming together that are getting in the way of our resilience?

On a societal level, a big piece would also be prioritizing well-being over productivity, such as none of us having to put all of our energy into work just to make ends meet. If we still have something like a state, what would collective reparations look like for victims of the PIC? Perhaps fully subsidized healing and health for all formerly incarcerated people, and people who have been disconnected, not only physically, but mentally & spiritually. We create a
Once we abolish the prison industrial complex, what processes or strategies can we use to respond to serious harm, including murder, rape, and assault?

Morgan Bassichis, CUAV: To respond to high levels of harm in ways that are not derivative of the PRC, we must first and foremost let go of the notion that there are “good” and “bad” people—that people who murder, rape, and assault people are “bad,” and that people who don’t are “good.” We all harm people and are harmed ourselves, in different contexts and conditions with different levels of power behind us. Accepting this does not minimize violence but actually empowers us to be able to face violence clearly. We can support the wellness of people who have been seriously hurt. We can witness their grief, rage, and sorrow and resource their healing. We can support people who have hurt others to address and resource their healing. We can support the wellness of those who have been seriously hurt. We can witness their grief, rage, and sorrow and resource their healing.

Mimi Kim, Creative Interventions: We are building our capacity to create community principles, skills, and institutions that not only respond to violence but also prevent and intervene in violence in all of its stages. Violence does not usually begin with a grand act of harm. It begins with signs or smaller violations that, if unchecked, lead to larger violations. We have to come up with processes of intervention that can address aggression at its smaller stages—so-called “gang member” that was supposedly nothing but trouble. It was our community and that person that kept me out of trouble. He took the responsibility and said, “I don’t want you following my footsteps.”

If I’m invested in my community, and I’m working and living in and with my community, it makes it harder to just turn my back and say it’s not my problem. It is my problem and it’s going to be a bigger problem if I don’t do anything about it. We need to answer to the people we grow and live with and the people we harm.

Bench & Jenna, Philly Stands Up: When the structures that perpetuate violence have been dismantled, we imagine the levels and frequency of interpersonal harm will be at a much smaller scale and will look radically different than they do now. When conflict and serious assaults/violence do happen, we can use a model of Transformative Justice that is rooted in building close community, naming positions of power and oppression, and using creativity and honesty to fuel accountability in an effort to empower the survivor(s) to claim and feel justice and offer the person who perpetrated harm the opportunity to own a part of it to make appropriate restitution.

Felipe Hernandez: We need to bring the responsibility to the community-based activist community. We need to show responsibility for people who are serving time to get back into society and as a community have these folks come back and be supported, to have services, to have places where they can go get answers and healing. Where people can come in and say, “Hey, we need some type of family intervention. My son and my husband don’t know how to talk to each other. Is there anyone who could help them talk to each other?” or “I heard you speak about struggling with this earlier, and it’s a similar thing for me. How did you get through it?”

We need to act with the understanding that every person is a valued member of our community and it is responsible for what goes on in our community. I grew up in Los Angeles during a very difficult time of LA history with the crack epidemic, sky-high murder rate, violence, and other things. The only reason I survived was because I did have that supporting community. We had the neighbors that were involved in our lives; that addicted person in the corner; the so-called “gang member” that was supposedly nothing but trouble. It was our community and that person that kept me out of trouble. He took the responsibility and said, “I don’t want you following my footsteps.”

Once we abolish the prison industrial complex, what could supporting survivors of violence look like?

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Mimi Kim, Creative Interventions: Although healing may be a different experience and process for all individuals, in addition to other strategies, survivors are responsible for creating alternative spaces to support the process of healing. The act of communities coming together to take interpersonal or intimate forms of harm seriously can and in and of itself make healing more possible. For many survivors the fact that support is not available is doubly traumatic. We need to find ways to be available to support survivors immediately and long-term. Support can look like emotional care, believing survivors, offering material support such as comfort, transportation, financial support; allowing them to go through the full process of grieving and healing. It also includes the process of supporting full accountability/transformation for people who have hurt others; it means that they can choose to do so in ways that are healthy for them.

Morgan Bassichis has been a staff member at Community United Against Violence (CUAV) since 2007. Founded in 1979 and based in San Francisco, CUAV works to support low-income and immigrant LGBTQ survivors of violence to create individual and community wellness. Morgan is also a volunteer with the Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project (TGIJJP) and an organizer of Transforming Justice. Morgan can be reached at morgan@cuav.org. / Bench Ansfeld finds political home with Philly Stands Up! and adores their job as a flower farmer. / RJ Maccani & Gaurav Jashnani work with The Challenging Male Supremacy Project, who was launched in New York City in 2008 to build transformative justice responses to heteropatriarchal violence through grassroots work with male/masculine-identified activists and organizers, by supporting community-based responses to violence against women, queer and trans people, and children, and through media-based projects such as the DVD & discussion guide produced with Bay Area-based partner organization, generationFIVE, “Paths of Transformation: African American Stories to End Child Sexual Abuse.” / Felipe Hernandez currently lives in Watsonville, CA, working with Gente Unido, an organization in Santa Cruz County working to prevent and curtail violence by reclaiming and restoring the safety of our communities through promoting unity amongst families and neighbors through community building efforts. Felipe brings his passion for peace through liberation and experience of working with a street-based youth in Los Angeles to his work as a mentor to young men in juvenile hall. / Mimi Kim is a long time anti-violence organizer and educator. Working in the domestic violence sector for over 20 years, Mimi co-founded Oakland-based Shënuuk. Korean Domestic Violence Program of the Korean Community Center of the East Bay in 2001. Mimi has also worked consistently in developing community-based organizing and in 2004 founded Creative Interventions, a community resource dedicated to establishing living, community-based alternatives to a range of violence. She has written extensively on domestic violence, community-based violence intervention, and has advised on community accountability initiatives.