



Mutual Aid and Community Care as an Abolitionist Practice

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The Black Knowledge Coalition

Who is The Black Knowledge Coalition?

The Black Knowledge Coalition is an education mutual aid network fueled by Black folks who have access to institutions of higher education or lived wisdom to share. BKC establishes a community based education system that arms the people with information necessary to facilitate their liberation. White supremacist institutions bar knowledge that encourages the critical thought which leads to revolutionary action. We serve as a resource to our community to increase access to this knowledge.

Teams

Admin

Ensure the organizational mission and principles are emphasized in all of our content and action

Online + In-Person Education

Generate educational content for the community including texts and discussion topics.

Social Media and Outreach

Create and design all content for social media including educational posts and live events.

What is Mutual Aid?

- Term coined by Peter Kropotkin, but put into practice by newly freed working class Black women in the US
- Based on principles of communalism
 - Looking out for your neighbor and community ownership of goods
- Requires a belief that institutions are not designed to handle the needs of the people
 - We keep us safe

What does Mutual Aid Look Like?

- Finances
 - Providing direct cash assistance
- Childcare
 - Looking after children of working parents-- it takes a village
- Education
 - Communal education outside of formal institutions
- Transportation
 - Rides to school, work, etc.
- Housing
 - Providing housing directly or supporting people experiencing housing insecurity
- Food
 - Grocery distribution, cooking meals, etc.

What are some examples of mutual aid that you have practiced?

Community Care and Individualism

- Individualism emphasizes self-reliance and independence
 - In a capitalist society, individualism is praised
 - Used as a tactic to “divide and conquer”
- Mutual aid and an individualist mindset cannot exist at the same time
- Individualism breeds suspicion and distrust
 - How do you respond when a stranger asks you for help?
- Hyper-individualism is a Western principle
 - Decolonizing your mindset means embracing communalism
 - Most cultures of color highly emphasize a communal mindset
- Community care means prioritizing the needs of your community like that of your own
 - Entering interactions with an attitude of service and collaboration
 - What can I do to support you? How can I use my personal resources to address your needs?

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 - Free housing
 - Free healthcare
 - Eradicating heteronormative, queerphobic, and patriarchal systems

How do Abolition and Mutual Aid Work Together?

- The oppressive institutions abolitionists seek to remove are the same that can and are replaced by mutual aid systems
 - Restorative justice requires the community relationships facilitated by mutual aid
 - Provide cash assistance to neighbors, investing both time and money into them
 - Institutions create systems that prevent this
- Decolonizing our understanding of self and our community is an act of abolition
 - Abolishing the individualist in your mind

How else can mutual aid provide an alternative to the systems we seek to abolish?

Let's Get Into It: Final Discussion

- What steps can we take to decolonize our understanding of need and support?
- How does the concept of abolition extend outside the carceral state?
- How is mutual aid a tool to bring together strategically divided communities?

Thank you!

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