



# The "F" Word

**This Month, Practice Safe Sex - and Activism!**

## **So You Want To Plan An Action?**

**By: Leah Turlo**

For starters, it's important to understand what an action actually is. Before I personally started planning actions, I knew them as **protests**. I now understand the difference between the two terms. An **action** is essentially a person or group of people doing a public demonstration to call for change. A **protest** is a type of action that is specifically against something (like a policy, or a pipeline) but actions don't necessarily have to be protests. This guide outlines the basics of planning and successfully executing an action but with room to accommodate your own activism style!

### **Step 1: Determine Your Specific Action Issue**

This seems obvious, but it's important to narrow your focus. Instead of protesting the entire government, it might be more efficient to just mobilize for a certain issue or to call for a specific change that you would like to see. Some successful actions have been centered on affordable college education, government budget approval, shady/racist governors, GMOs in plants, and Wall Street corruption. Notice how all of these are specific issues and not overarching themes.

### **Step 2: Find a Co-Organizer**

I cannot stress the importance of this enough. Find someone who you know is passionate about the same issue and ask them to help you plan your action. This way, you're not overburdened with all the work that goes into planning these things, and you have someone to bounce ideas off of.

### **Step 3: Pick a Method, Date/Time and Place**

Some actions involve large groups of people chanting with signs, and some involve people silently sitting in strategic locations to block paths. If you're doing an action on a college campus, it's important to consider the rules that the campus has. For example, UMaine does not allow going into dormitories and causing a ruckus, but there are no rules against mobilizing on the Mall and marching all around campus. If you search "Activism Actions" on Google, a lot of good resources pop up that can help you out.

\*When choosing a date, it's important to give yourself enough time to mobilize other people to participate. You don't want to be scrambling the day before your planned action to find people to participate. \*

### **Step 4: Mobilization**

This is the hardest part of organizing an action. People are busy (especially on college campuses) and may be hesitant to commit to participating in an action. But fret not! Student organizations are a great way to get the word out, but always ask the group leader if you can speak ahead of time and make sure that you're being smart about which groups you approach. If you're fighting for free college education, it might not be a good choice to go to the College Republicans and ask for their support. However, if you were fighting for Second Amendment rights, they would be an awesome resource for you! Cater your outreach to your action.

There are also non-partisan ways to garner support and get the word out about your plan. I highly discourage using FirstClass to advertise your action, because EVERYONE can see it, and it gives the opposition time to mobilize too (which just makes things awkward come action time). In this new age of social media, it's super easy to create an event on Facebook for your action, and invite everyone that you know supports your cause. This also gives you a platform to communicate with all of the participants, and makes your plans a little more secret than if they were on FirstClass.

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When describing your action to people, make sure you're educated on the issues and ready to combat any opposition or uncertainty with facts, figures, or even pandering to emotions. By making your action about the individual you are talking to, they're much more likely to participate.

### Step 6: Do the Action!

The day has come. You have a solid group of people, you've made signs and you've determined both your issue and who/what you're going to target. You're probably pretty nervous at this point. However, keep in mind that you're exercising your democratic rights, and that's pretty cool. Not a lot of people have the guts to go out and directly call for change. Good luck and happy chanting!

### Upcoming Events

**November 30<sup>th</sup> – Feminist Film Series: *The Mask You Live In*.** *The Mask You Live In* follows boys and young men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating America's narrow definition of masculinity. It ultimately demonstrates how we, as a society, can raise a healthier generation of boys and men.



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## #PeopleNotPawns

By: Kirsten Daley

This month I will discuss something that bothers me deeply and proves that good intentions can get you into trouble. The videos of Syrian children after bomb strikes are exploitative. They do not help these children, not anywhere near enough for me to excuse the trauma porn that is being produced of these minors who are unable to even consent to this invasion of privacy. The video of the Syrian boy in shock after a bomb blast saw national coverage, and I'm sure it made some well meaning Americans think. However, how many of these people did something? Donated to the cause? Learned more about what's going on? Now an even more important question: how many Americans defended it? Activism is meant to help people, it is meant to demand justice and equality where there is an absence of it. What is just about broadcasting the most traumatic moments of a child's life? We don't do this to American children, in fact we have laws in place that prevent people and the media from revealing names and pictures of sexual assault victims, domestic abuse victims, trauma victims and crime scene photos. Are these things only available with an American citizenship? Do the values that teach that this exploitation is wrong only apply to American people, namely white American people? Would these videos even exist if these children were from Western countries? The power dynamics here are unbalanced and these videos smack of a thoughtless version of activism that seeks to use children as political pieces to make a point. If one wants to help those in Syria, demand our government bring an end to drone strikes, especially in civilian areas and hospitals. If one wants to help donate to organizations, check out [CharityNavigator.org](http://CharityNavigator.org) under the Syrian Crisis tab. But most of all, if one wants to help the people of Syria, start looking at it as a country of human beings--not viral videos of suffering to be used to shock others into action. #PeopleNotPawns.

### Letter From the Editor

We here at WGS recognize that the past couple of weeks have been hard for a lot of members of our nation. There have been immense feelings of uncertainty, fear, and doubt. With that in mind, we want to give everyone of all ages, races, religious affiliations, etc. a safe space to talk about their thoughts or to just be in a quiet area. Our office is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM.

**STAY TUNED FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE!**

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