

COMPLETE CLOWNFRONTATIONAL TOOLKIT



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CHAPTER 1 ORIGINS & PHILOSOPHY

We are a network of **ACTIVISTS & CLOWNS** who encourage creative, surprising, entertaining and disorienting forms of activism. The core of **N.A.To.** lies in a practice of people collectively sharing **know-how**, experience and ideas. We merge different artistic **approaches** and **methods**, including **classical clowning**, **Theatre of the Oppressed**, **Rhythms of Resistance** and **Soundpainting**.

ORIGIN OF N.A.TO

The clown Atlas originally introduced N.A.To as a card game in which anyone could put on a clown nose recycled from waste materials and discuss their plans to change the world. These first N.A.To's already established some important aims, such as devising a ministry of laziness and making an explosion of harmony. Atlas also invented the **Gravity Strike**, a form of poetic protest, which has become a trademark practice in N.A.To's methodology.



ASSEMBLY

N.A.To is organized around people coming together to share ideas, skills and knowledge of various performance methods, as well as planning public activist happenings and actions. We consciously create a radically welcoming space, in which mutual care and support are key. We work with plenums, peer-to-peer support, emotional and caring empowerment. Each assembly has a specific theme and is often connected to current topics that are currently present in climate or social justice movements or specific local or global events.

HOW TO ORGANIZE N.A.TO

N.A.To is an open source project, meaning that you are welcome to propose and organize a gathering. We have some important principles to guide N.A.To organizers in holding such a gathering.

General/Logistics Planning:

- △ **Know your objective** – keep it clear and focused.
- △ **Know your target group** – describe the gathering as concretely as possible in writing.
- △ **Announce early:** Send out an early announcement „Save the Date“ and include clear details about the event, workshops, and schedule.
- △ **Venue selection:** Ensure that the venue has appropriate spaces for workshops, accommodation, and communal dining.
- △ Consider the season and weather when planning. Winter/summer seasons affect the options for the program, schedule and participation.

Program Planning:

- △ Know your goal and offer relevant workshops.
- △ Encourage participants on the first day to form small care groups for mutual support and dedicate time in the program for them to check-in regularly.
- △ Flexible schedule: Keep the program flexible, allowing for changes based on group dynamics and changing information or circumstances.
- △ Define which parts of the program are non-negotiable (locked) and which can be changed (unlocked).
- △ Limit activities to 2–5 per day to avoid overburdening the schedule.
- △ Include a (half) day for rest in the middle of the event.
- △ Dedicate the last day for reflection and check-out. Give everyone a chance to talk out their feelings and opinions.



Space Organization:

- △ Work in smaller groups to reduce the strain of large group interactions.
- △ **Resting/Quiet Room:** Provide a quiet space for participants to unwind.
- △ **Accessibility:** Invite participants to share their access needs and ascertain what changes may need to happen to ensure the maximum safety and comfort.
- △ **Defined roles:** Assign day managers, timekeepers, and meeting facilitators at least a day before and provide clear instructions as to the responsibilities of their roles.

Daily Routine:

Designate buddies for external guests to ensure their needs are met without disrupting the autonomy of the group or its process.

Daily routines help create an environment in which participants develop a sense of familiarity and safety, which supports them in determining and achieving their shared goals.

Practical Tips:

- △ Daily check-ins: Include a 30-minute organizers' check-in at the start of each day. Optional parallel check-ins for care groups.
- △ Day manager rotation: Rotate day managers and timekeepers daily to share responsibility.
- △ End-of-day reflection: Quick 5-minute check-out of the whole group before dinner to wrap up the day.
- △ Send out an information pack with daily schedules ahead of time.
- △ Printed schedules: Provide printed schedules for all participants and make sure they are clearly visible at the venue.
- △ Drinking water, snacks and trash bins: Ensure water and food are available and recycling bins are in place.
- △ Sound signals: Use a gong, bell, or fun alternatives to signal group transitions.