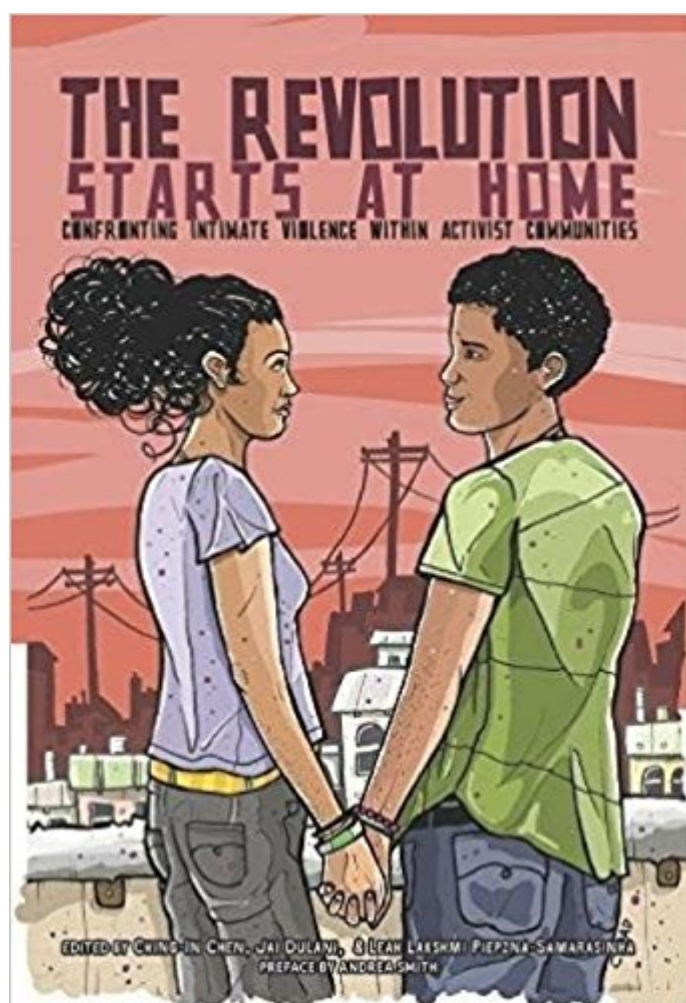


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# The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities



## Synopsis

The Revolution Starts at Home is as urgently needed today as when it was first published. This watershed collection breaks the dangerous silence surrounding the intimate violence within social justice circles. Just as importantly, it provides practical strategies for dealing with abuse and creating safety without relying on the coercive power of the state. It offers life-saving alternatives for survivors, while building a movement where no one is left behind. Praise for The Revolution Starts at Home: My joy and gratitude at the original publication of Revolution Starts at Home is now only exceeded by my excitement in the reprinting of this essential text. If we are to build visionary communities rooted not only in resistance but also in love, we need this book, and books like it, for survival. It is as simple as that. Walidah Imarisha, author of Angels with Dirty Faces: Three Stories of Crime, Prison, and Redemption This book has brought me back from the brink of desperation many times. Its creative, real-world stories of interrupting intimate partner violence without using police or social services strengthens our community, builds our collective imagination, celebrates our resiliency, and pushes us to hone our practice. I keep a stockpile of this book on my shelf for gifting; it's required reading for justice seekers. Shira Hassan, founder and principle consultant for Just Practice. The editors of The Revolution Starts at Home have provided a landmark resource: an anthology by and for survivors of sexual assault led by editors of color, all three of whom are revolutionary leaders seeking to deconstruct the structures that uphold violence in activist communities. For anyone who believes that the personal is deeply political in social justice circles, The Revolution Starts at Home is a must-read. Allison McCarthy, Ms Magazine The Revolution Starts at Home is a mirror to look into when doing the work of 'transforming ourselves to transform the world', as Grace Lee Boggs taught us. The voices in this collection speak from their own experiences, modeling vulnerability that, for me, was freeing as I turned to face the patterns of personal and organizational abuse in my life. This book is an offer towards wholeness, and can heal you if you let it. adrienne maree brown, co-editor of Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements The book isn't just about how social services and state intervention can leave already vulnerable communities more at risk when it comes to addressing interpersonal violence; the personal essays, real-world testaments, and tools provided are about taking transformative justice to the next level and creating community and self-accountability. Kjerstin Johnson, Bitch Magazine Ching-In Chen is the author of The Heart's Traffic. Jai Dulani is a writer and multimedia artist who has worked for racial and gender justice at the intersections of LGBTQ, youth, immigrant justice and anti-violence movements for over

a decade in New York City. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha is author of the Lambda Award-winning *Love Cake*, as well as *Dirty River* and *Consensual Genocide*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's about goddamn time a book like this was published. Like [This Bridge Called My Back], the editors of *The Revolution Starts at Home* have provided a landmark resource....For anyone who believes that the personal is deeply political in social justice circles, *The Revolution Starts at Home* is a must-read." Ms Magazine Blog "If transformative justice is now becoming a widespread movement rather than a localized phenomenon (and I believe it is), my best bet is that *The Revolution Starts at Home* will go down in history as one of the movement's most important precipitants." Upping the Anti "If this book had been published ten years ago, I would have perhaps not felt so isolated, or have felt that just because someone could dedicate themselves to the bettering of society, that they were not capable of turning their internalized anger onto me. I would have not felt so alone." Persephone Magazine "A document of more than 10 years of community accountability work, this anthology is bursting with transformative poems and stories, well-developed models, vital guidelines and new questions. By providing resources and excellently written pieces about experiences and strategies, *The Revolution Starts at Home* offers appealing alternatives for ensuring survivor safety and hope that more activist communities will name and break patterns of violence." Xtra! Toronto

The extent of the violence affecting our communities is staggering. Nearly one in three women in the United States will experience intimate violence in her lifetime. And while intimate violence affects relationships across the sexuality and gender spectrums, the likelihood of isolation and irreparable harm, including death, is even greater within LGBTQI communities. To effectively resist violence out there--in the prison system, on militarized borders, or in other clear encounters with "the system"--we must challenge how it is reproduced right where we live. It's one thing when the perpetrator is the police, the state, or someone we don't know. It's quite another when that person is someone we call a friend, lover, and trusted ally. Based on the popular zine that had reviewers and fans alike demanding more, *The Revolution Starts at Home* finally breaks the dangerous silence surrounding the "open secret" of intimate violence--by and toward caretakers, in romantic partnerships, and in friendships--within social justice movements. This watershed collection compiles stories and strategies from survivors and their allies, documenting a decade of community accountability work and delving into the nitty-gritty of creating safety from abuse without relying on the prison industrial complex. Fearless, tough-minded, and ultimately loving, *The Revolution Starts at Home* offers life-saving alternatives for ensuring survivor safety while building a road toward a revolution where no one is left behind. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

When I first read the tagline for this book "Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities" I wasn't entirely sure how helpful it would be for understanding and thinking through intimate violence -in general- but as I love INCITE's perspective and work I decided to give it a go anyway; and I am so glad I did. It's truly hard to encapsulate in a few words all that this book is, but I can tell you, if what you're trying to think through or understand are myriad forms of intimate violence and abuse without the common black and white frame of "if he hits you, you leave him and report him to the police!": this is your book.

This is an excellent book jammed packed full of awesome information such as transformative and restorative justice and the resource - "How is gender oppression within progressive, radical and/or revolutionary movement(s) maintained, supported, encouraged? However I've noticed that the group of contributors know each other, work with each other and therefore I will only give this book a 3 star rating. I wish other voices would of been included that are not well known or even excluded within these so called "movements" and "spaces." This book is very focused on urban and urban

movements. It lacks ways to take action in rural, remote and even reservation communities, although there is mention of Indigenous-Native women's issues but not in respect to life on the rez. If this book is to speak of marginalized experiences then it should include writers, poets and community organizers (workers) who are not well known, excluded, on the margins and outskirts. Those of us at home are doing some of the hardest work. I've found that many of these "alternative" and "progressive" movements exclude those of us who are doing the work in a rural, remote and reservation communities. Additionally, the book leans politically left which is fine however there are allies and voices who are more conservative or even identify as Republican. This book misses the mark that allies can be found on the "other side." I would like to see a second book which is more inclusive to those of us who are taking action and doing community work on these very difficult issues in rural, remote, reservation communities as well as those of us who lean more politically right and conservative identifying.

I first read *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities* (ed. Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha), in 2015, not long out of an abusive relationship, and it helped me make sense of what I'd experienced. In it, I found people who had been in situations like mine, caught between oppression from society at large and abuse in their own relationships and communities. I returned to it this year for hope and guidance in dealing with violence and abuse in my own communities, and it continues to deliver. *The Revolution Starts at Home* is an anthology of essays and a few poems about people surviving and resisting violence, seeking alternatives to the state's dangerous and often inadequate interventions. It's divided into four sections:

- "Safety at the Intersections of Intimate, Community, and State Violence,"
- "On Survivorship,"
- "(Re)claiming Body, (Re)claiming Space," and
- "We Are Ready Now."

As in life, the boundaries between these sections are fluid and a little bit arbitrary. My favorite section, in 2015 and now, is "On Survivorship." Gina de Vries's essay "Homewrecker" describes a relationship with a lesbian who endlessly criticized her and created an us-against-the-world dynamic in which boys were the enemy and bisexuality was both too queer and not queer enough. Biphobic abuse had been one of the hardest parts of my own relationship to talk about, because people who barely understand abuse in queer relationships are doubly unprepared for when lesbians weaponize biphobia against their

partners. *Homewrecker* made me feel seen and understood in a way I desperately needed. Right after *Homewrecker* is *The Secret Joy of Accountability: Self-Accountability as a Building Block for Change* by Shannon Perez-Darby. I remembered this essay as another for my favorites from 2015, but its title scared me when I returned to it. Accountability for survivors? That sounds dangerously like victim-blaming. But it's not.

*Accountability* continues to strike me as a peculiar word choice, but the essay is about the fact that survivors make choices, even when those choices are constrained by violence against them, and that survivors' resistance can look like abuse if you're focused on individual actions instead of patterns of power and control in the relationship. This is crucial for anti-violence activists to understand, and it helped me release fear and guilt from my own relationship, too. The next essay, *Seeking Asylum: On Intimate Partner Violence and Disability* by Peggy Munson, offers a crucial analysis of how unmet survival needs and the difficulty of accessing reliable caregiving makes disabled people susceptible to abuse and may even make sometimes-caring, sometimes-abusive partners more desirable than the alternative. It also discusses specific tactics abusers may use to maintain control over disabled victims, in connection with more general strategies. I won't go over the rest of the book in such fine detail, but it contains reflections on survivors' and community organizers' guiding principles and language, their stories, and the specifics of their intervention strategies. The writers move smoothly and consciously between the general and the personal, so readers can observe practices that could be applied in other situations as well as how communities adapt those practices in their specific work. *The Revolution Starts at Home* is full of different organizations' and communities' step-by-step models for supporting survivors and holding abusers accountable. It helps me feel like there's a way forward. As co-editor Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha acknowledges in the preface to the second edition, *The Revolution Starts at Home* marginalizes sick and disabled people and trans women. Beyond Peggy Munson's essay, disability rarely comes up in any way but survivors' trauma. I long for resources about how to navigate situations of abuse in which two disabled people accuse each other of abuse and symptoms such as brainfog, memory problems, and dissociation complicate an already difficult situation. I want resources to help me distinguish between nonnormative but respectful disabled ways of being and relating in relationships and behavior that's influenced by disability and crosses the line. This book

can't give me that. The Revolution Starts at Home includes an essay by a trans guy (Freedom & Strategy/Trauma & Resistance by Timothy Colm), but it's largely a letdown on trans issues and occasionally a complete mistake. Several essays mention genderqueer people as a vulnerable population, but they don't really dig into the specific ways transness influences abuse situations. One of the resources in the back refers to society privileging "males and the male-identified" and devaluing "female and the female-identified," which raises some cis-as-default red flags, and "Without My Consent" by Bran Frenner invokes the incoherent and transmisogynistic concept of "male bodied privilege." Still, The Revolution Starts at Home is a vital and foundational text for anyone experiencing or healing from intimate violence and anyone looking for preventative or reactive solutions. Wherever you are in your understanding of these issues, this book will give you information, strategies, and the hope to carry on. I'm glad to have it in my collection and expect to return to it many more times.

This was an important but hard read for me. I have a complicated relationship with community-based solutions violence & harm, deeply believing in their necessity as a prison abolitionist but also having witnessed the many times they haven't worked for me & others. That aside, I think this collection can give activists & organizers a lot to think about, discuss, practice, retweak, try again. I was most moved by "Ending Oppression. Building Solidarity. Creating Community Solutions." and "Seeking Asylum" because of the former's concrete tools & processes and the latter's focus on ableism & disability justice. I know for myself, I needed time for healing from acute trauma before I could dive in to this volume because of how some of the language has felt / does feel like victim-blaming, making false equivalencies, and expectations of forgiveness or emotional labor in order to prove one's "wokeness", but I think the viewpoints offered can add to a toolbox of approaches when thinking about how to approach harm & violence within activist communities.

This book is required reading for anyone interested in social justice. For those who want to make positive change in the world, we need to answer the question of how we will confront these issues within our own communities.

this book is brilliant and needs to be the standard reading required to build a safe and

accountable movement.

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