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# Catharsis Theme Camp Handbook 2020

Flow, Accountability and Support

## Catharsis on the Mall Mission

*Catharsis on the Mall exists to create accessible spaces for healing. We do this by expanding the bounds of expression, connection, and inclusion in public and civic places, through direct engagement in participatory art, political action, holistic modalities, and sacred practice that restores ourselves and our communities, fostering social change.*

**Note:** All Catharsis theme camp documentation including this document (and the folders for adding your plans/checklists) can be found at [catharsisonthemall.com/theme-camps](https://catharsisonthemall.com/theme-camps)

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# Introduction

Thank you for collaborating and bringing your gift to the National Mall for Catharsis! We are excited that the event continues to grow. Please be as communicative with the Programming team & Program Managers that are assigned specifically to your theme camp in the months leading up to May with any questions or concerns.

**The process outlined below is grounded in three key priorities:**

- **Co-creation** - Theme camps contribute & host quality offerings and experiences; we want to nurture and amplify this, decentralize, and increase the autonomy of contributors to connect with participants and define what Catharsis “is”.
- **Safety & Permitting** - Weather conditions and permitting requirements on the Mall are beyond what most folks expect and are used to; we want to provide a safe environment, honor our permit, and empower camp leads to easefully focus on their camp and not these aspects.
- **Culture** - As we grow, we want to foster a strong culture that is sustainable, accessible, aligned with Catharsis on the Mall’s defined [mission](#), and bridges across the typical boundaries and cliques of the “festival”/“burner” communities.

To meet these priorities, we lay out three major aspects of our process for Theme Camps in 2019.

- **Flow** - the actions and timelines for theme camp members to flow through, from submission to Leave No Trace (LNT) and Disengagement.
- **Accountability** - our shared values and commitments in the context of Catharsis, and the mutual practices we use to hold each other in those values and commitments
- **Support** - attention, energy, resources and expertise made available to theme camps to meet the flow and accountability areas.

We ask all theme camps to take these priorities and aspects seriously as part of contributing to Catharsis on the Mall. We also recognize that this collaboration and process is experimental and aspirational, mistakes will be made (by all of us), and we will continue to learn, improve, and adapt over time. We (Catharsis organization) see ourselves as equal collaborators with you in this work, while also respecting our particular community responsibility to be excellent stewards of our permit and the space so it can remain available to our community in the future, and we can continue to reflect our community well to the wider public.

# Flow

## Important Dates

<b>Theme Camps (TC) - Check the Community Stakeholder Schedule <a href="#">here</a></b>	
Jan 3 2020	Theme Camp Application Open
Jan 14 2020	<b>Community Stakeholder Meeting - De-Mystifying the Permit</b> <i>7pm - 8pm @ 3605 14th St NW</i>
Feb 1	Theme Camp Application Close
Feb 1	Catharsis Grants Application Close
Feb 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TC notified of acceptance / status</li> <li>• Connected to your TC Program Manager</li> <li>• Theme camp pairings / collaborators connected with each other*</li> </ul>
March 10	Release initial <u>draft</u> placement map
March 15	<b>Theme Camp Leads</b> Have a preliminary schedule for programs in development
March 15 - 25	<b>Theme Camp Leads</b> Reach out to individuals without theme camp to include in your programming - <b>Catharsis will send additional communication on this</b>
<b>March 20</b>	<b>FINAL</b> Permitting & Safety Plans due for NPS permit deadline <b>(no exceptions)</b>
March 23	Permit submitted to NPS, no major changes after this
April 1	<b>FINAL</b> Scheduled Elements (What / Where / When) completed to be included on website / printed information <b>(no exceptions)</b>
Apr 19	<b>FINAL</b> On-Site Logistics and Mission & Culture Checklist completed
Apr 28 - May 1	<b>Build Week!</b> Start time @ Sunset April 28
May 1	<b>THEME CAMP INSTALLATION COMPLETE</b> by 12pm on May 1
May 1 - 3	Catharsis on the Mall
May 3 - 4	Disengage & Leave No Trace (LNT)
Late May	Theme Camp Feedback Surveys, In Person Debrief

# Key Deliverables

Catharsis will make a Google Drive Folder for your Theme Camp to submit all of your documents directly. ***This information will be sent with your acceptance email!***

## 1) Theme Camp Initial Application

### **Due by: February 1st**

- Theme Camp Application for Catharsis - [Application Form](#)
- If you are interested in applying to a [Catharsis Grant](#), the deadline is February 1st.
- We will be in touch re: your status and next steps by February 15th.

## 2) Safety & Permitting Plan

### **Due by: March 20**

Once you've been confirmed, you will have an assigned TC Program Manager to assist you during this process. We understand that there may be complexities that you might necessarily think with NPS land. Our permit has some special requirements.

Given this, please make sure that **March 20th** is not the first time that your TC Program Manager is seeing your Safety & Permitting Plan.

The Safety & Permitting Plan - Template and Instructions

### **You will need the following information**

- A physical description of structures
- Tent Floor Diagrams for any tents / structures
- Confirmation of all permitting and safety requirements, including:
  - Staking
  - Turf protection
  - Load/Unload & Mechanized Vehicles
  - LNT
  - Fire hazard equipment & power/fuel handling needs
  - Occupant load and exit signs / fire extinguishers
- Structural safety plans

### 3) Mission & Culture Checklist

**Due by: April 19**

Please complete the Mission & Culture Checklist. You will need to include:

- Accessibility
- Radical Inclusion for Contributors
- Consent and Safety
- Decommodification
- Mission & Accountability Alignment
- Support

### 4) On-Site Logistics Checklist

**Due by: April 19**

Please complete the On-Site Logistics Checklist. You will need to include:

- Load In / Build Plan
- Logistics During Vigil
- Space Management, Capacity Plan & Greeters during Vigil
- Disengage / LNT Plan

### 5) Scheduled Elements Submission (What / Where / When)

**Due by: April 1st**

- We will send additional information on this step after your camp has been accepted. Until then, please review the website for inspiration on how to curate a program.
- Once you get **Next Steps** - the information collected allows us to smoothly update our website and share it with the public prior to and during Catharsis.
- Save at least 20% of your programming for our friends that don't have theme camps.
- Catharsis will collect their information, create a Google Sheet, and give more instructions on how to create a curated program in collaboration with them.
- *Catharsis will support in this effort if Individuals aren't being responsive.*

## Things to Consider During/Post Catharsis

### On-Site Walkthrough

#### **April 29-30**

Our TC Program Managers and Safety Experts will check in throughout build week and have a final walkthrough near the end. We will let you know the time.

#### **Together you will review**

- Complying with the Safety & Permitting Plan
- Any electrical / fuel / heating / etc training needed?
- Discuss LNT / Disengage plan and expectations

### Post-Vigil Feedback

**Due by: Late May**

**Catharsis will send a Post-Vigil Feedback Survey.**

## Accountability

Catharsis is providing the above Flow and Deliverables as practices for holding each other in our shared values and commitments (accountability) for the Catharsis space.

**We would also love to hear how Catharsis can be more aligned with these values and commitments.** This is a mutual process.

For each value we provide a short context statement and commitment, and then list a few best practices. **We do not expect everyone to be perfect in every area.**

**Important Note on Safety:** Catharsis on the Mall believes that safety is an essential aspect of accessibility. Catharsis does not permit art or activities that might reasonably cause some participants (especially those who face greater oppression) to feel unsafe without their consent. This includes art or speech that might be experienced as hateful or inciting hate or violence.

If you have any concerns, or are aware of anything that might cause unnecessary risk, please let us know. We will be happy to review, discuss, and find ways to resolve or mitigate as needed. If an incident comes up during the Vigil, feel free to find a ranger, or anyone with a radio to let them know so we can manage the situation in the best way possible.



## 10 Principles

The origin and philosophy of Catharsis on the Mall owes a major debt to the [10 Principles of Burning Man](#), as recorded by Larry Harvey in 2004 (plus Consent which we affirm as an [11th Principle](#)).

We do not take these principles as dogma or gospel, and appreciate discussions around their blind spots and how they might grow and evolve in theory or practice. Still, many of our organizers and participants practice them and often find they provide a helpful lodestar in determining how to organize, show up, and relate to one another.

## Radical Accessibility & Radical Inclusion

Catharsis on the Mall's stated mission is "to create accessible spaces for healing." We believe that access is the biggest need for today's spaces and work for healing, creation, and connection. More work is needed to deepen access, even at a free, public vigil. Thus, in creating a Camp with us, you commit to deepening our accessibility, reducing barriers (visible and invisible), and prioritizing those who may be left out and seeking ways for them to feel welcome and included.

### Things to Note:

- Spaces and activities ought to consider and prioritize the needs of folks with visible and invisible disabilities, such as mobility, hearing, fragrance, anxiety, general high sensitivity.
- Facilitators and members ought to recognize the experience of many participants who are encountering our culture for the first time and have little or no direct context on or connection to what is happening when they arrive at a space.
- Please prioritize contributions of folks who have historically had less access and felt less included in the American burner / festival community and culture.
- Existing context on and connection to our vigil and culture is sometimes wrongly assumed for all who are in the space; anyone who arrives alone or may seem lost or confused is NOT someone else's problem. Please make them feel welcome.
- Make sure to use your space as a place to receive contributions from not only immediate friends, but anyone who can contribute. Use this opportunity to grow your direct and larger community! You never know who can help take your vision to the next level.

## Consent & Autonomy

Our mainstream culture lays siege every day to our consent and autonomy - through sexual violence, pervasive and addictive advertising, student debt, social pressure to conform, the list goes on. We commit to creating spaces where we can unlearn these habits and practice consent and autonomy in relating to ourselves and one another.



**Things to Note:**

- Participants should be encouraged to seek and honor the consent of those they would engage with. Participants are easily able to opt out and/or receive support in resolving any situation where their consent and boundaries are not being honored.
- Activities in a space are facilitated in a way that honors different participants' varying styles of engagement, observation, and methods of participating at a given moment.
- Thoughtful layout of a space prevents participants from becoming "trapped" in a certain situation or activity due to crowding or social norms. If consistent engagement is needed from those present for a period of time, this is communicated clearly for those entering the space.
- Pay attention to circumstances that may create opportunity for consent violations around touch or verbal harassment and be proactive in intervening or redirecting moments you see.
- Do not impose overly loud or distracting presence in a prominent area which nearby participants are forced to pay attention to. Please collaborate with neighbors to share space well.

## Connection & Immediacy

In a dominant culture that constantly reinforces disconnection, separation, and mediation from our immediate experience, we believe that deepening connection and immediacy (within the bounds of safety, consent and autonomy) provide a path to healing for all of us. This includes with ourselves, our bodies, the unknown, our immediate communities, and beyond. We commit to foster experiences that encourage participants to connect and be in the present moment.

**Things to Note:**

- Spaces and activities should encourage immediate connection between participants who are present, as well as within themselves.
- Make space for immediacy, whatever is happening, even if it differs from what was planned or an intended structure. Contributors are willing to roll with this without too much attachment or ego.
- Check in with each other, exploring who or what needs attention or wants to emerge (including ourselves). See one another generously. Practice vulnerability and presence.
- Ensure activities do not only focus on the facilitator, and spaces invite interaction with the art. Energy should gravitate between participants and what each person is experiencing.
- Be flexible on your schedule, especially if circumstances change. Deviating generates opportunities for things to shift and can be viewed in a positive light, rather than causing stress.

## Civic Responsibility

We, the participants and creators, are the ones responsible for what this vigil is and what it is becoming -- just as this culture was stewarded and passed down to us from those who came before. We commit to actions that honor our responsibility to culture, to community, and to the next generations who will inherit what we nurture today.

### Things to Note:

- Identify and resolve problems that arise. Please communicate, and ask and offer help with our neighbors and collaborators; similarly be empowered to act when called upon.
- Recognize the hard work and dedication of many who enable us to participate in this vigil today. Plan well and prepare to honor regulations, good relations, and LNT to ensure that those who come after will be able to do this, too.
- Hold space and capacity to support unexpected issues that come up in the moment, even if you were not the ones who generated them.
- When a problem arises, find a solution rather than simply telling the organizers and letting them handle it. Proactivity in creating resolution is an important aspect of leadership and participation.
- Think ahead about litter, mud, and other impacts from activities. Your role does not stop the moment you get your infrastructure off the Mall by the permit deadline. No one else will take care of it.

## Decommodification & Gifting

### Things to Note:

- Catharsis is a gift with no profit motive or admission. As a “free burn” the cost is simply your participation and the hope is you will give what you can to help offset the real financial costs of our community vigil. In order to foster a place of consent free of profit motives we all must work to reduce commodification of Catharsis. We hope participants and stakeholders like you understand that Catharsis is not a place to market yourself, your art, or companies in any way. The goal of decommodification is typically enforced by everyone who identifies when such commodification is occurring. As we know that the “default” world ingrains in us to operate differently, this can sometimes be an ideology to strive for -- albeit sometimes imperfect. It’s a see something say something policy and we appreciate your cognizance in practicing this value.
- When accepting support from generous companies in the form of free products, please take steps to remove corporate logos, and if that’s not possible, do not accept the gift.
- Ask campmates who want to provide gifts to share non-branded products.

# Support

Over the years we have worked to empower each other, meet our shared needs, and bring our shared visions to life. We recognize this process can be a lot to navigate and want to make sure that you are able to manifest the vision for your art in the easiest, most successful way possible. Thank you for bringing your magic and creativity!

Some of the ways we strive to support you:

- **Clear Expectations to Support Better Planning**
  - Documentation from us about permitting & logistics on the National Mall
  - Up-front process and communications so we all know what is happening going in
- **Advice and Expertise shared**
  - Open communication, planning time, and an open inbox / phone to answer your questions
  - Clear communication and on-site availability with core team
- **Resources**
  - Grant and stipend funding for your projects
  - Accessibility of tools and expertise on the ground (with up-front notice, see *logistics checklist*) so we can better support you
- **Connections**
  - Connect with other camps and artists through the community stakeholder meetings
  - Connect with volunteers and contributors to make your camp happen, based on needs you share with us

**We are honored to invite you to join us on this journey to a place of warmth, comfort, togetherness and welcoming with A Vision of Haven. Your dedication and energy in radically participating and co-creating our future is what will allow us to make this a successful event. Thank you in advance for your hard work and for joining us on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 2020, on the National Mall to come together in unity, connection, and healing!**