

CORE VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT: Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN) is a human rights organization committed to ending violence against adults, youth and children through support, advocacy, education, and community organizing.

SPAN is based out of Boulder, Colorado, on land known to the Arapaho as “where it is steep”, and as part of Turtle Island, a name given to North America by many Native peoples. The Hinóno’éí (Arapaho), Tsistsistas (Cheyenne), Diné (Navajo), and Nučiu (Ute) are among the many tribes that are connected to this land. The history and traditions prior to colonization are beautiful and complex, and we honor their teachings and ongoing connection to this land as an essential part of SPAN’s Core Values. According to Diné teachings, “healing is achieved through the process of strengthening our ties to the land, practicing our Native cultures and languages, and treating one another with respect. We believe these values are mutually self-reinforcing by nature.” (<https://utahdinebikeyah.org/>)

We recognize everyone comes to SPAN with their own unique experiences, and it is not expected that everyone will know the concepts and terms in this document. It is expected that everyone engaged with SPAN remain committed to conversation, asking questions, making mistakes and being part of a collective dedicated to ongoing learning and growth.

SPAN acknowledges that violence is rooted in a history of exploitation via colonization. Interpersonal violence/domestic violence (IPV/DV) takes place within and alongside oppressive institutions and ideologies devised to maintain power and control over historically marginalized individuals and communities. Our work preventing violence and supporting those who go through IPV/DV acknowledges the unique experiences survivors have as it relates to their identities, for both the strengths and challenges they offer.

For SPAN to provide accessible services and foster healthy community connections, we recognize the need to continuously work on centering the knowledge and experiences of Queer and Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (QTBIPOC). This requires intentional grassroots efforts to dismantle and disrupt the burdens and stressors created by white supremacy to the lives of all survivors. Examples of this includes accessing justice within and outside the U.S. legal system; having access to safe and affordable housing; making a living wage; bringing greater awareness via education, outreach, and fundraising efforts; and promoting holistic post-traumatic growth that honors and respects survivors’ wisdom and lived experiences.

The work of community building, transformative justice, and anti-violence organizing has been taking place across many cultures and generations. Inspiration for SPAN’s Core Values includes but is not limited to: the US Civil Rights Movement, the Delano grape strike organized by Filipino-American and Mexican-American farmworkers, indigenous environmental activism of Latin America, the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement, liberation theology as taught by leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Óscar Romero, the Essie Justice Project, and individuals such as Prentis Hemphill, Grace Lee Boggs, Mariame Kaba, Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Berta Cáceres, Betita Martínez, SPAN community members, among countless others.

These Core Values were created to guide and sustain working relationships within the SPAN community, which is made up of clients, staff, interns, volunteers, board members, and collaborative partners. We value the knowledge that comes

from the lived experiences of individuals accessing services and providing support at SPAN. As noted by the Essie Justice Project, wisdom exists at the intersections of compounded pressure.

We are intentional in efforts to understand what it means to re-Indigenize and decolonize our work and interactions with one another to create and sustain connection and joy. This is in addition to the responsibility of disrupting and resisting the oppressive systems that SPAN community members interact with. This includes but is not limited to white supremacy, cissexism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, classism, and oppression based on perceived country of origin and/or religion.

Social location does not predetermine experience. It does, however, guide SPAN's efforts to consider the strengths of an individual and community, as well as oppressive barriers they may face. Through all our programs (Education, Legal Advocacy, Counseling, Shelter, Housing & Economic Justice, Development, Human Resources & Administration) we strive to be:

- **Survivor and Youth Directed:** Providing voluntary services, meeting people where they are at and having their wishes guide advocacy & education efforts.
- **Trauma-Informed:** Recognizing the toll of daily lived experiences of oppression and the complex trauma survivors of DV/IPV experience. Emphasizing humility, compassion, and empathy to foster post-traumatic growth within individuals and in community.
- **Strengths-Based:** Appreciating the resiliency, self-advocacy efforts, and tools people acquire to support their survival and self-defined success. Building upon unique strengths instead of assimilating to a one-size-fits-all approach to advocacy or education.

SPAN's Core Values were written to guide communication and action in all settings at SPAN in order to build a strong community. These values are integral in disrupting abuses of power. We are in an ongoing process of creating and implementing community-based practices that provide opportunities for non-punitive collective repair, healing, understanding, respect, and sustenance, all of which require:

Accountability

Acknowledging harm as well as creating an environment where accountability is modeled and expected. It requires effort to not only understand power and privilege but to step into or relinquish power based on identities.

Receptivity

Providing feedback (especially when harm has occurred) takes emotional labor on the part of the person who has been harmed. Receptivity is a willingness to hear and receive feedback, with acknowledgement of the labor that went into it, and a clear effort to change oppressive behavior.

Transparency

Transparency around decisions impacting this community help cultivate a sense of trust and build collective accountability.

Vulnerability

Care of this community requires each person to show up authentically and ensure historically marginalized individuals and communities are not solely carrying the burden of truth telling. “Mistakes” are expected and necessary to illuminate opportunities for changed behavior.

Acknowledgement

This was written by a group of staff and interns at SPAN and was most recently updated on January 5, 2021, during a Transformative Justice group that has been meeting weekly following the police killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. This group began by contemplating the role SPAN, as a nonviolence organization, could play in reimagining how to build peaceful communities *not* dependent on state violence. Our conversations turned quickly inward in recognition of a need to look at SPAN’s own internal values, processes, and commitment to collective repair. The Black Lives Matter amplification and challenges of a global pandemic were the backdrop to this iteration of SPAN’s Core Values, which we acknowledge will continue to evolve.

