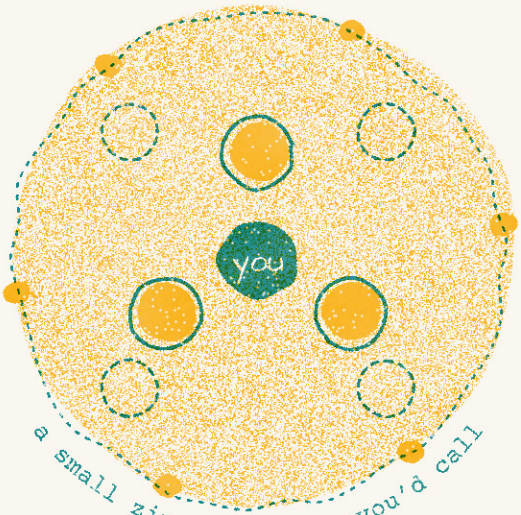
WHAT IS A POD?

Wilfred Henry
insearchofpeace.press

companion to
What Is a Circle?



A POD IS THE PEOPLE YOU'D CALL.

If someone hurt you. If you hurt someone. If you saw it happen and froze.



Not a hotline. Not the police. Not "the community."

NAMES.

WHERE THE WORD COMES FROM

WHO, SPECIFICALLY?

The Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective started saying "pod" in 2014. Mia Mingus, a cofounder, wrote up the pod mapping worksheet in 2016.

They were building ways to respond to child sexual abuse without police or prisons. That work leans on community. But community meant something different to everyone, and plenty of people didn't feel like they had one.

A pod is smaller and more honest. It asks: who, specifically?

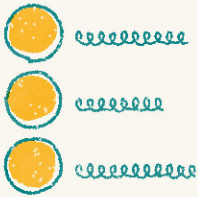
In 2020 the word got borrowed for quarantine bubbles. Same shape, different question.

COMMUNITY IS A FEELING. A POD IS A LIST.



COMMUNITY

a feeling



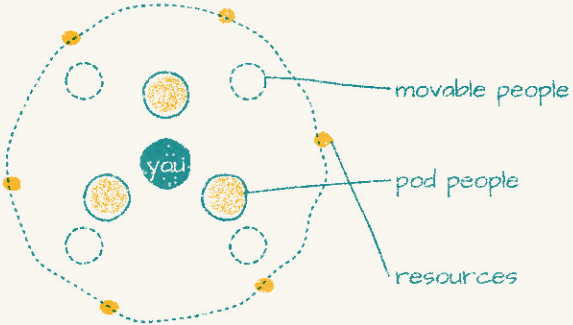
POD

a list

You can belong to a community and still have no one to call at two in the morning.

Pods don't replace community. Mingus calls them "a critical building block" for it.

HOW THE MAP WORKS



You go in the middle.

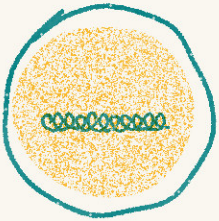
Solid circles: your pod.

Dotted circles: people who could be.

The outer ring: groups and places that can help.

SOLID LINES

People you trust and can actually reach. The ones who'd pick up, and who you'd let in.



a name



a group

Write names, not groups. "My friends" isn't a pod. A name is.

ONE NAME COUNTS.

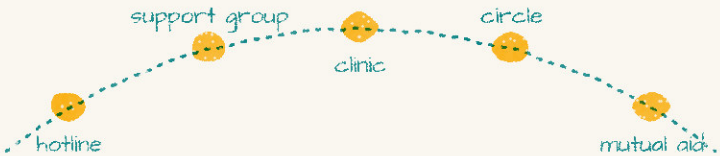
DOTTED LINES

People who could be in your pod with some work. More time. More trust. A conversation you haven't had yet.



Sometimes that conversation is about what you'd want from them. Sometimes it's about whether they'd call the police.

THE OUTER RING

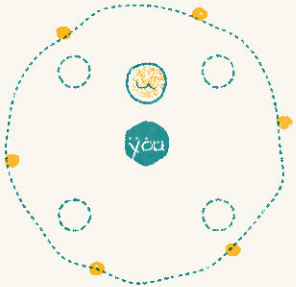


Groups and places. A hotline, a support group, a clinic, a circle.

They're not your pod. They don't know you the way a person does. Write them down anyway.

WHEN THE POD IS THIN, THE RING HOLDS MORE.

MOST PODS ARE SMALL



most maps look like this

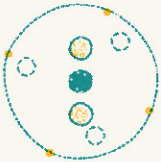
Most people have few solid, dependable relationships. A lot of pods are one or two people.

Some are empty. That's information, not a verdict. Plenty of us were moved, raised, or pushed away from the people we'd need.

START WITH THE DOTTED LINES.

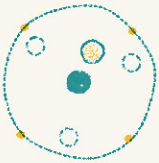
MORE THAN ONE POD

You may need different people for different things.



IF I'M HURT

who'd believe me and sit with me



IF I HURT SOMEONE

who'd tell me the truth and stay



IF I SEE IT

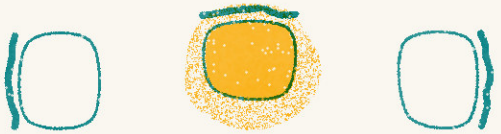
who'd help me figure out what to do

Make a map for each. The names won't all match. That's the point.

THE HARDEST ONE TO FILL

The collective found it's harder to find support for accountability than support after being harmed.

Plenty of people will hold a survivor. Fewer will sit with someone who did harm, refuse to excuse it, and refuse to throw them away.



won't excuse it

won't throw them away

If you're on someone's map for that, it's a big job. It's also how harm stops getting passed down.

NOBODY GETS ACCOUNTABLE ALONE.

BEFORE YOU WRITE A NAME

Ask yourself:

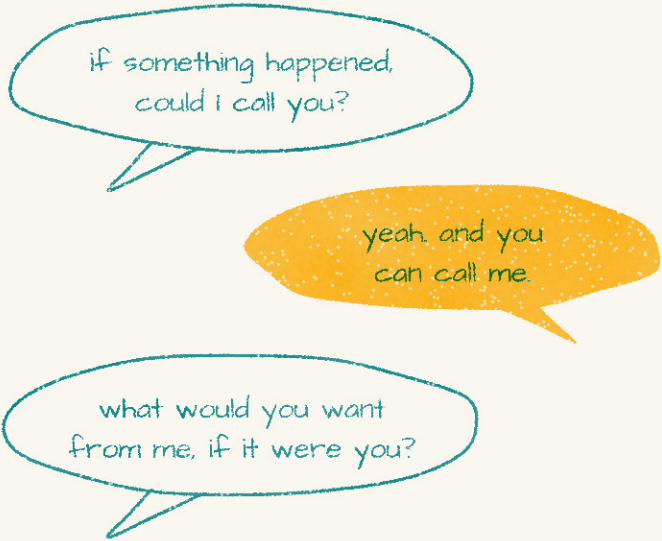
- [ ] Would they pick up?
- [ ] Would they believe me?
- [ ] Would they tell me the truth?
- [ ] Would they call the police without asking me?
- [ ] Do they know they're on my map?

No one passes all of these.

THAT'S WHAT THE DOTTED LINE IS FOR.

TELL THEM

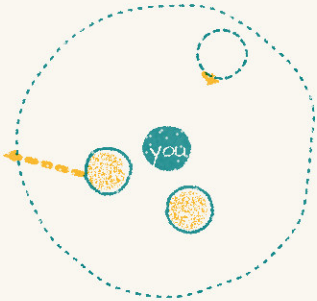
A pod works better when it knows it's a pod.

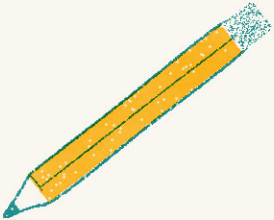


Ask what they'd want from you, too. A pod goes both ways.

PODS CHANGE

People move. Friendships end. Someone dotted turns solid. Someone solid drifts to the outer ring, or off the page.



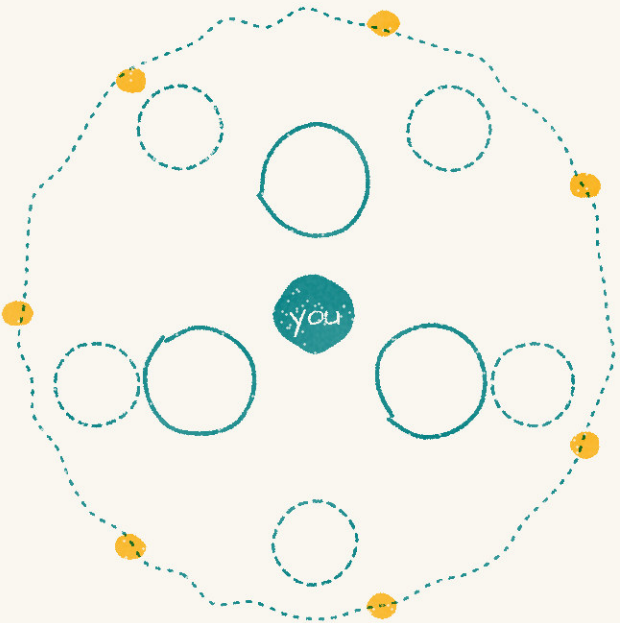


Redraw it every so often. Ask again.

DRAW IT IN PENCIL.

DRAW YOURS

Names, not groups. Pencil. Add circles if you need them.



On the outer ring: the groups and places you could reach.

READ

- **Mia Mingus & BATJC**, "Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet" (2016)
- **Mia Mingus**, *Leaving Evidence*, leavingevidence.wordpress.com
- **Mariame Kaba & Shira Hassan**, *Fumbling Towards Repair*
- **generationFIVE**, *Ending Child Sexual Abuse: A Transformative Justice Handbook*
- **Creative Interventions**, the *Toolkit*
- **insearchofpeace.press**, *What Is a Circle?*



Copy this. Make one with someone.



What Is a Pod? · Wilfred Henry · text of 3 November 2026

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