



# WHAT KIND OF ACTIVIST AM I?

## OBJECTIVE

This guide is intended to help you refine your role as an activist in order to suit your strengths, values, and interests. Thoughtful consideration of how you want to show up can help you find the most meaningful ways to contribute and grow your impact over time. By finding the roles and projects that align with your skills and comfort levels, you avoid overstepping, duplicating work, or taking on more than you can handle. Your intentionality can help prevent burnout, which keeps the movement sustainable and ensures everyone's contributions are valued.

## WHAT THIS COVERS

This guide covers how to identify your strengths, discover your activist role, and take steps to support abortion access. It includes self-assessment questions, descriptions of activist types, and practical advice for plugging into existing networks and building sustainable activism.

## WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This guide is for anyone interested in supporting abortion access. It's designed for activists at all levels, whether you're new to activism, looking to strengthen your involvement, or exploring new ways to contribute. It's also for people who want to better understand their own approach to organizing and how they can use their strengths to make a meaningful impact.

## STEP 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

These questions focus on identifying their strengths, comfort levels, and preferred ways of engaging in activism.

### YOUR STRENGTHS AND SKILLS

Everyone brings unique strengths to a movement. Whether you have hands-on skills, specialized knowledge, or lived experience, understanding what you're good at can help you find fulfilling ways to contribute.

What skills do you already have that could support activism (e.g., organizing, being multi-lingual, writing, public speaking, digital security, art and design, medical knowledge, caregiving, making and building things)?

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Do you prefer working directly with people or behind the scenes?

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Are you comfortable as a spokesperson or do you prefer one-on-one conversations?

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Are there specific tools or platforms you're already familiar with that could help the movement (e.g., Photoshop, Tik Tok, Canva)?

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**YOUR COMFORT LEVEL**

Activism doesn't have to look one way; there are important roles for both high-risk and low-risk actions and projects. Knowing your comfort level helps you find the best ways to contribute without burning out, or putting yourself in harm's way.

Are you comfortable participating in protests or direct actions?

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Are you willing to take risks (like potential legal consequences) to support your cause?

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How do you feel about interacting with people who disagree with you?

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Are you in a position where certain risks could impact your livelihood, family, or safety?

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How do you feel about being publicly associated with pro-abortion work?

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YOUR INTERESTS AND MOTIVATION

Understanding what drives you to take action helps you focus your energy on work that feels purposeful and aligned with your values. When your activism connects to your personal interests, it can keep you motivated and engaged in the movement for the long term.

What issues within abortion access feel most important to you? You might just have a general interest or you might be motivated to work on a certain angle (e.g. youth access, doula work, sharing information about pills, cultural/creative work, digital organizing, targeting Crisis Pregnancy Centers, storytelling).

What motivates you to take action?

Do you want to focus on immediate, hands-on support or long-term systemic change?

Do you want to work on a local, state, or national level?

YOUR CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT

Sustainable activism starts with understanding your own limits. It’s important to be honest about how much time and energy you can commit, so you don’t burn out. Whether you’re interested in joining an existing group or starting your own project, knowing your capacity will help you choose a role that works for you.

How much time and energy can you realistically give to activism?

Are you interested in joining existing groups or starting your own project?

Do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team?

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Are you open to learning new skills to grow your activism?

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT

After answering these questions, take time to reflect on what stands out to you.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Which questions were easy to answer and which ones made you pause?
- Did any patterns emerge about your strengths or comfort level?
- Are there areas where you feel confident and others where you want to learn more?

MATCHING YOUR SKILLS TO THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

To make a meaningful impact, it’s essential to understand how your unique skills might meet needs in your community in a way that complements existing efforts and avoids duplicating work. Take time to assess what’s already happening locally and identify where your contributions can best support existing movements. Collaboration builds stronger, more sustainable movements that can adapt and grow over time. For more on this, [see the toolkit on Landscape Assessment](#).

ASK YOURSELF:

- In what ways do my skills and interests align with the current needs of the movement, and how can I use them to make the most meaningful contribution?
- Am I stepping into a role that’s already being covered by others? If so, is there a way that I can support those already doing the work?

STEP 2: WHAT KIND OF ACTIVIST AM I?

This section breaks down six core activist roles: Frontline Activists, Organizers, Amplifiers, Caretakers, Strategists, and Advocates. Each role highlights what they do, the skills needed, and what makes someone a good fit.

FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS:

**WHAT THEY DO:** Disruptors lead bold, high-visibility actions like protests, sit-ins, marches, and civil disobedience to directly challenge oppressive systems. Their actions are often designed to draw public attention, create urgency, and expose injustice in powerful ways. They push conversations beyond comfortable boundaries and disrupt “business as usual” to demand immediate change.

- SKILLS NEEDED:** Risk tolerance, public speaking, organizing protests, communication under pressure, knowledge of protest laws.
- GOOD FIT IF:** You’re comfortable with visibility, willing to take legal risks, and motivated to disrupt harmful systems.

## **ORGANIZERS:**

**WHAT THEY DO:** Organizers are the movement's backbone. They plan and coordinate events, campaigns, and direct actions to build collective power. They bring people together, manage logistics, and ensure that actions are strategic and effective. Organizers focus on sustaining momentum by fostering strong relationships and creating community structures that can withstand long-term challenges.

## **AMPLIFIERS:**

**WHAT THEY DO:** These activists use creative tools and educational platforms to spread the movement's message and share critical information. They shape narratives through media, art, and storytelling, while also providing educational resources and training to empower others. Educators may focus on workshops, teach-ins, or skill-sharing that helps individuals and communities take action.

## **CARETAKERS:**

**WHAT THEY DO:** Caretakers offer direct, practical support to people seeking abortions and activists on the frontlines. This can include providing rides, arranging lodging, offering emotional support, or covering childcare during protests or actions. They ensure people feel supported and cared for, making the movement more sustainable and accessible to those facing barriers.

## **STRATEGISTS:**

**WHAT THEY DO:** Strategists focus on creating sustainable systems and long-term plans to keep movements organized and effective. They build digital infrastructure, design workflows, and coordinate volunteers to ensure that activism efforts run smoothly. Strategists often work behind the scenes, ensuring that resources, plans, and people are all aligned for success.

## **ADVOCATES:**

**WHAT THEY DO:** Institutional Advocates work to change policies and laws from within existing systems. They engage in lobbying, advocacy, and electoral work to push for legislative reforms and long-term policy changes. They focus on achieving sustainable progress through formal channels, often building coalitions and negotiating with policymakers to influence abortion access.

**SKILLS NEEDED:** Project management, logistics, conflict resolution, leadership, community-building.

**GOOD FIT IF:** You're highly organized, enjoy planning, excel at problem solving, and love working with people to make things happen.

**SKILLS NEEDED:** Teaching, storytelling, public speaking, writing, graphic design, social media, facilitation.

**GOOD FIT IF:** You're a creative thinker, passionate about sharing knowledge, and want to engage people emotionally and practically in the movement.

**SKILLS NEEDED:** Organization, problem-solving, empathy, discretion.

**GOOD FIT IF:** You prefer behind-the-scenes work, have limited time, or want to offer direct help in a specific way.

**SKILLS NEEDED:** Project management, leadership, systems thinking, problem-solving, tech-savviness.

**GOOD FIT IF:** You love organizing processes, creating sustainable systems, you prefer working behind the scenes, and are interested in helping movements run smoothly.

**SKILLS NEEDED:** Policy analysis, research, lobbying, public speaking, negotiation.

**GOOD FIT IF:** You're interested in politics, enjoy working through formal systems, and want to focus on legal change.

## STEP 3: PUTTING YOUR ROLE INTO ACTION

Once you've identified your activist role, the next step is to take action. Here's how to move forward:

### MATCH YOUR SKILLS TO THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The needs and infrastructure for abortion access vary in every city, neighborhood, and state. What's needed in one place might already be covered somewhere else. Understanding the local landscape helps you figure out where your skills can best fill gaps. Take time to research what's already happening and where support is most needed. Are there under-resourced groups you can assist? Are there areas where your strengths complement existing work? By plugging into ongoing efforts, you can build stronger collaborations that adapt to your community's unique challenges.

*See our [Abortion Landscape Field Guide](#).*

### PLUG INTO EXISTING WORK

Look for abortion access organizations in your community or online and see how you can contribute based on your skills. When reaching out, share what kind of work interests you, your availability, and your strengths. Be patient: delays in responses don't reflect on your worth. Organizations may have specific times for onboarding volunteers or could be managing high workloads. Sending a friendly follow-up email shows your commitment. Persistence and resilience demonstrate that you're reliable and ready to support their efforts.

### COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ACTIVISTS

Every activist role contributes to a collective movement, and working across roles makes the movement stronger. Joining or building activist networks can help you share knowledge, coordinate actions, and sustain long-term efforts. Whether it's an online community or a local group, building relationships with others strengthens your activism and connects you with support. Connect with others to balance strengths and fill gaps. For example, Disruptors may rely on Strategists to plan actions. Amplifiers can use their platforms to elevate work happening on the ground, while Advocates can use policy knowledge to support grassroots efforts.

#### PRO TIP

Share this toolkit with your friends to explore where everyone fits. Building cross-role collaborations leads to more sustainable, impactful activism.

## KEY TERMS

**Capacity:** The time, energy, and resources someone has to dedicate to activism. Understanding your capacity helps you avoid burnout and choose sustainable actions.

**Comfort Level:** A person's willingness to take risks, be publicly visible, or engage in high-profile activism.

**Direct Action:** High-visibility protests or demonstrations designed to disrupt systems of power and draw public attention to issues.

**Movement Sustainability:** The long-term health and effectiveness of a movement. Sustainable activism involves balancing personal capacity and ensuring collective efforts are supported over time.

**Risk Assessment:** The process of evaluating potential risks (such as legal consequences) before engaging in activism.

**Self-Assessment:** A reflective process to identify your strengths, interests, comfort level, and capacity to find the activist roles that suit you best.

**Values Alignment:** Ensuring that your activist role matches your personal values and the needs of the movement. Aligned actions tend to feel more meaningful and sustainable.