



# ART of Green Dot & Sanctuary

Welcome to the ART of Green Dot. This Advanced Ranger Training (ART) will introduce you to:

- The Green Dot mission as part of Jilakin Rock Rangers
- Team structure
- What Green Dots do
- Sanctuary
- Hand-offs & Documentation

Pre-reading this document will give you a better understanding of why we have Green Dot Rangers, their organisation and their role in the Jilakin Rock Rangers. It will also provide some inkling of whether you are interested in becoming a Green Dot Ranger.

Please note, though, that completing this training module requires attendance at a face to face training event run by the Lead Ranger where you will have an opportunity to respond to some scenarios and practice a few of these skills. Reading this document neither demands nor guarantees your involvement as a Green Dot. Rather, it is a first step into a mutual journey to find a great place for you to contribute to the Jilakin Rock Rangers. If nothing else, we hope that understanding a bit about how the Ranger Team works will make you a better Ranger. At the end of the training, if you think you want to participate on some level as a Green Dot, flag this with the Lead Ranger. If accepted, you will be provided with a mentor shift...and gifted a Green Dot patch for your Ranger shirt.

## **Mission**

The Blazing Swan Event can be the catalyst for a variety of overwhelming experiences. The Green Dot team are Jilakin Rock Rangers who support participants who may be having an emotional, mental, or spiritual crisis that, A) goes beyond the capacity of their local community and standard Jilakin Rock Rangers to support, B) does not yet need professional services.

## **As Rangers**

Green Dots are Jilakin Rock Rangers who have undertaken specialised training in dealing with psychological distress. Essentially, they are members of the Ranger community that have an additional level of expertise that can be drawn upon by Black Swan and Ranger Shift Command when needed.

Green Dots manage a specific and limited resource called 'Sanctuary' where highly overwhelmed or disoriented participants can withdraw to while they regain their agency.

## **Operations**

The Green Dot team works alongside the other Rangers on patrol. When a Ranger or event participant finds themselves supporting someone in emotional distress that they deem beyond their capacity to provide, they can request Green Dot support through Black Swan.

Whenever possible that support will be provided at the distressed participant's location: the goal of Green Dot interactions is to enable the participant to return to their previous engagement in the larger community of Jilakin Rock City (or 'City'). Providing support within the comfort of the participant's immediate community is preferable to removing the participant to Ranger care or from the event.

Sanctuary is a limited resource, reserved for those who have the greatest need for a sheltered experience and will disrupt the shared space?? least. The space is open to a maximum of X participants at any one time, who have an intense need of somewhere peaceful to process their distressing or overwhelming experiences.

Since emotional crisis may accompany other forms of crisis, the Green Dot team will establish a process to give and receive handoffs with other teams and departments (Medics, Security and any Theme Camps offering participant support). These handoffs will be discussed in more detail below.

The possibly recurring nature of Green Dot situations makes it necessary to track information about the history of each Green Dot interaction to enable effective and cumulative work by later Green Dots, while maintaining the privacy of the individuals involved.

## History & Pre-emptive Planning

The establishment of Green Dot specialism and a Sanctuary space within the Jilakin Rock Ranger team will mirror best practice from the international Ranger community and draw upon the strategic thinking and operational processes established within the Black Rock Rangers of the Burning Man Organisation.

As a Regional Burn, officially sanctioned by Burning Man, Blazing Swan has experienced rapid growth during its first four years compared to other Regional Burns.

Year	Theme	Participants
2014	Inception	1400
2015	Inspiration	1900
2016	Illumination	2200
2017	Elemental	2800

During the first two years of Blazing Swan, Rangers were essentially emergency first responders for medical, fire, and community safety issues. Each year, the Blazing Swan Committee has sought to strengthen its emergency services so that by 2017 it had fully established professional Medical and Fire services and Theme Camp liaison, Mutant Vehicle, Safety Teams and Rangers operating on site.

This has allowed the Rangers to develop and hone necessary skills to become trained volunteer participants who;

- provide non-confrontational community mediation;
- preserve community welfare;
- are the eyes and ears on the ground for potential safety issues and
- uphold the quality of experience through promoting Blazing Swan's 11 principles.

As the event grows, attracting many participants for whom this is their first 'Burn' (or Burning Man related) experience, it is anticipated that there will increasingly be a small number of participants who present to Rangers with more complex emotional, psychological or spiritual issues. An example of this might be a participant who is experiencing temporary levels of heightened anxiety due to a mix of tiredness, disorientation, over-sensory stimulation, and/or consumption of mind altering substance/s. Such participants would not normally require professional emergency medical or psychological services, but have reached out to Rangers nonetheless and require more specialised skills for their support than most Rangers are trained to give.

To support these participants, the Jilakin Rock Rangers will prepare a functional team, designated as Green Dot Rangers. Green Dot Rangers will be drawn from the Ranger community on a voluntary basis and be provided with an induction and training program. Upon completion, they will be awarded a Green Dot patch for their Ranger shirt to identify their additional range of skills.

## **Team Structure**

Rangers on patrol who have successfully undertaken Green Dot training will become a resource which can be called upon by the Ranger Shift Command Team.

While we encourage Green Dots to express their preference for working in the City or in the Sanctuary, the actual allocation of Rangers to venues will depend on the current needs of the community - there may be shifts where no Sanctuary is required. Rangers who are not yet full team members but have interest in Green Dot work should similarly identify themselves to the Rangers Shift Command Team.

Ideally, a Green Dot who is responding to a crisis will have backup from another Ranger who is skilled in and comfortable with the situation at hand, and who brings to the situation diverse presentation characteristics (like gender, age, or fashion), skills and/or preparation. This provides the most effective handoffs within the crisis itself, and reduces the likelihood of needing further support. However, if coverage is thin due to staffing or load, Green Dots may be paired with Rangers who are not part of the team on shift, to allow for faster response time within the city.

Ranger Shift Command lead will work with the Sanctuary Lead and Green Dots on shift to effectively manage the overall deployment of this resource. When changes to operational policy are required in real-time to respond to the evolving situation during the Blaze, the Ranger Lead and Sanctuary Lead are empowered to adjust procedures for the team as necessary.

## **What Green Dots Do**

### **Skills**

Green Dots normally bring an off-playa background in counseling, psychology, or altered states. These include a wide range of professional, vocational, and artistic perspectives. It is critical to note that the relationship between a Green Dot and the participant they are supporting is not a therapeutic one. There was no consent prior to the crisis for the Green Dot to apply their perspective toward helping the participant “make the most” of their experience for personal change, rather the help sought is an afterthought of the participant, or recommended by a bystander. Green Dots are more comparable to crisis-line counselors or the friend on the couch, than to an emergency psychologist or shamanic healer. Participants and guests in Sanctuary are not clients

nor patients. Our goal is to help them get through the crisis in a way that allows them quicker and smoother reintegration to the community.

### **The goal is not growth: it is catch and release.**

The most important Green Dot skill is listening. Participants in crisis often have an acutely keen sense for immediacy and pretension. Green Dots need to bring their full authentic presence and focus to the situation. Balancing that with their Ranger radio skills is likely to be the hardest part of the job - whenever possible, Green Dots should let their partner monitor their radio while they work with someone in crisis. The simple fact that someone safe, sane, and sensible is paying close attention to the disoriented participant provides a powerful anchor in their internal turbulence. It can be hard to remain focused, but compassion and patience are critical. It is important not to “talk them down”, and attempts at manipulation usually backfire. Green Dots neither confront nor confirm their unrealistic perceptions. Instead, they keep their own center and make their ears and heart available to them.

An empathic and balanced peer’s presence alongside a distressed participant is immensely powerful.

Beyond that, there are a wide variety of considerations that can make a difference. These will be discussed in more detail in the training sessions themselves, and make for great conversation between calls when you’re working with other Green Dots. For example:

- awareness of gender complexity and reactions runs quickly to deep currents;
- attention to the background setting of the scene for noise, symbols, signals, and other sensory and representational input has dramatic leverage;
- keeping in contact with your core ranger skills, processes, and resources provides a rich set of tools;
- understanding the signals, characteristics, and effects of various physical, chemical, psychological, and spiritual stresses provides powerfully nuanced perspective;
- assessing their history in the situation can make critical differences
  - what is their experience as a blazer, and community of support both locally and at home?
  - what is their immediate experience – when was the last time they slept, drank water, ate food, what medications have they taken, or not taken?
  - what were the events leading up to the crisis?
  - what memories of powerful psychological events in their past have been triggered?
  - what kind of framework for understanding do they bring to their experience?
  - what kind of verbal or physical support are they open to receiving?

Caring for the body of the person in crisis is often the most effective way to change their experience. The usual assumption is that a train of thought drives the emotions, and the body then reacts to the emotional impulses and situations the mind directs it into. Our experience is that the reverse is often a more accurate: the state of the body in its situation drives the emotions toward either flight-or-fight when survival is in jeopardy, or relaxation when safety is assured. For example, if an individual has missed a night's sleep, in their over-tiredness they may start to become physiologically aroused (more easily angered, excited or anxious) or start to have disruptive thoughts by attaching emotions to the experienced physical state (paranoid ideations, rumination).

As a final note, repetition or 'cycling' in the participant's train of thought and speech is quite common. They are processing a set of considerations linearly and the complexity of the processing leads them to take repeated "passes" through the set of considerations.

Do not be surprised or distressed if the conversation is looping - this can be a powerful advantage when you notice it. It allows you "rehearsal" time internally - when you see the same thread coming around again, you can reflect on other ways to respond to it, and keep trying variations in your approach till you find one that is most helpful.

The length and complexity of the loop can give you indications of the direction their mental integration is proceeding: if they are losing the capacity to communicate, their cycles will become shorter, tighter, and more urgent; if they are gaining mental capacity, their cycles will become longer and contain more complex material. In the former case, be prepared to escalate their level of care; in the latter, you have the opportunity to help them find perspectives that lead them back to reintegration.

## **Sanctuary**

Sanctuary is frequently seen as the most concrete representation of the Green Dot team and also our most limited resource. Sanctuary is intended to be a quiet, sheltered environment for a small group of the most disoriented participants. Using it as a drunk-tank or an automatic dumping ground for anyone who is acting troublesome is counter productive, and makes it unavailable or ineffective for the intended support.

**Sanctuary is for those whose level of being overwhelmed requires a kind of shelter that cannot be found elsewhere in Jilakin Rock City.**

Sanctuary is located behind ranger HQ. Please do not invite others to "check themselves in" their, nor direct them to find it on their own. People who need access to Sanctuary (for themselves or their friends) must go through Black Swan or the Ranger Shift Command. Many unnecessary interruptions to the function of the space can be avoided by going through channels that can address the participant's needs in other ways.

Sanctuary is the primary space for quiet care. It will have a relaxing atmosphere, gentle stimulation, opportunity for rest (including a few cots), and some simple food, hydration, and environmental support.

Sanctuary will be hosted by two Green Dot Rangers, one of whom will be designated Sanctuary Lead. This person is responsible for the interfaces between Sanctuary and the rest of the world, rather than for interacting at length with the guests. Sanctuary Lead manages intake / drop-offs, organising and initiating paperwork, hand-offs out of Sanctuary or other forms of guests departure, and maintaining supplies and resources for the space. The Lead will be monitoring the Ranger radio channel and field enquiries about the availability and status of the Sanctuary, ensuring due discretion for privacy about the presence of people brought in earlier.

The Green Dot in Sanctuary will normally split their activities between roles of sitting and writing. Sitting provides focused attention to the guests, while writing captures information and provides logistical support within Sanctuary.

The records of a visit to Sanctuary can provide invaluable information to help resolve reoccurring situations later in the week that have developed further from an initial visit, including camp location, friends/support networks and the background of the crisis. Sufficient information to confirm that a participant is the same individual when returning to Sanctuary and brief notes around their presentation will help to build a picture and inform decision-making for further intervention or an escalation of intervention.

### **What do you do with a drunken burner?**

[Alcohol] causes “a state of shortsightedness in which superficially understood, immediate aspects of experience have a disproportionate influence on behavior and emotion.” Alcohol makes the thing in the foreground even more salient and the thing in the background disappear. That’s why drinking makes you feel attractive when the world tells you otherwise: the alcohol removes the little constraining voice from the outside world that normally keeps our self-assessments in check. Drunkenness is not disinhibition. Drunkenness is myopia.” Malcolm Gladwell. “Drinking Games” The New Yorker, Feb. 15 & 22, 2010

In the hypersensatory world of Jilakin Rock City, this disconnect about the effects of alcohol can be especially problematic. People overindulge because it is what they imagine is expected or necessary to fully enter the intensity they are seeking or the less-inhibited self they are searching for. Instead, they frequently confront their problems, which come to meet them against one of the biggest examples of solitude they have ever encountered.

No wonder many folks are undone by alcohol consumption on the playa, especially when dehydration, unfamiliar food schedules, and high expectations are added to the mix.

So, what to do with a Drunken Burner?

If the problem appears to be exclusively alcohol-related, don't bring them to Sanctuary! The only things that can help someone who is drunk are distraction and sleep, with water in either case.

In the intensely introspective atmosphere of Sanctuary, the mental myopia induced by alcohol actually may become worse. They may also pose a difficulty towards any other mental work going on in there - if the drunken person is excessively weepy or belligerent, they can become a distraction for others who are in a very emotionally malleable state.

Look for a distraction to point the person toward, and some friends, old or new, to keep them focused upon something exterior to themselves and drinking water. Moving and walking can also help by being a focal point and keeping the metabolism up. Where possible campmates or other friends should be enlisted in this venture, if they are unknown, enlist the help of the community. Eventually, the participant will need a place to sleep, ensure that any helpers are prepared to help the participant find a safe place to sleep.

Just a reminder: As many of us know all too well, drunken myopia can make a person very suggestible. Exercise good judgment in leaving a drunk in the company of new folks: we don't want anyone taken advantage of in any way.

Sanctuary beds are a limited resource, it is better if they are taken up with someone who can benefit from the introspective vibe of the space. If the person is simply in need of sleep, a suitable place should be found. Ideally, this should be in their camp. If at all possible, their camp should be located and campmates enlisted to help the ailing citizen. (The finding of the camp can be enlisted as a distracting game of sorts if done right...) If this is impossible, another place to sleep should be sought, preferably in a low-traffic area that is open to the public at large with couches or hammocks.

If a person seems to be suffering in a very bad way - unable to walk and/or completely disoriented, then the participant should be taken to medical for an evaluation and professional diagnosis.

## **Hand-offs**

The Green Dot team works at a nexus of other resources and roles - the revolving door between types of care is key to our work. Participants often pass through an intense

mental crisis on their way into and out of other forms of crisis. We act in partnership with the groups that provide support for those other types of crises. Knowing when and how to give and receive the hand-off of a participant and their situation is key.

The Ranger Patrol team is our primary community facing partnership. The Shift Lead will direct Green Dot resources to participants identified in the city who may need our support, and provides the coordination for all other ranger resources and inter-departmental interactions as they do for all Rangers.

When a participant is ready to return to their role in the city outside our support, Patrol Rangers are often the ones to accompany them for that transition.

The same situations that must be reported to Black Swan by all Rangers still apply in every way to interactions as part of the Green Dot team. It can be challenging to balance your sympathy for the participant and role advocating for them with the need to protect their health and the safety of other participants in the City. If you have concerns for the health of the participant you must get medical services immediately. Similarly, if you suspect that they may have been involved in a crime on playa this year, you must get Black Swan involved as soon as possible. This is often best done through your partner: "I think Black Swan needs to hear this" is usually sufficient to get a face-to-face started, and you can then return your full attention to supporting the participant.

The Medics are our next most-frequent partners. In many cases, mental and medical crises go hand-in-hand. If you even have doubts about the medical condition of a participant, get support as usual from Medical for an evaluation. A discussion with Black Swan will identify if this can be done in the field, at Sanctuary or - only transport the Medical station.

Medics are the first point of contact for a participant where a professional psychological crisis team may be required.

In cases where the participant is either:

- directly involved in what may be a current crime;
- where they may be a danger to themselves or others;
- may need restraint or observation at a medical facility due to the intensity of their crisis or
- show signs of acute mental health issues – such as the inability to distinguish factual reality that is typical of a psychotic break;

hand over immediately to Black Swan who will enlist the relevant agency support.

The other participants in the participant's camp may need Green Dot support where the situation has been playing out over time. Black Swan or Ranger Shift Command will direct Green Dots as required.

Medics and St. John's are medical professionals operating on-playa with an on-duty emergency medical doctor. They may request support for patients under their care, or more often for those leaving their care to reintegrate into the City. Similarly, someone under our care whose medical condition is getting significantly worse quickly may need to go directly to the on-playa Medics. These hand-offs should be coordinated through Black Swan, and request for hand-off from them will usually go through Black Swan or the Sanctuary lead.

Green Dot Rangers seek to ensure that any interaction with the Police and/or our paid security team is both cooperative and supportive. They are building social capital with the agency that provide essential backup when a participant becomes violent or was the victim of a crime. All State and Federal laws apply on playa and where the Police are enacting these... our role is one of support only if called upon.

Over time, the Green Dot presence will seek to build the kind of relationship that allows local law enforcement to see Rangers as a resource. For example, if the Police are able to hand off a particularly disoriented participant to Green Dots they do not have to write in their report that the unruly individual was released directly into the public.

By treating the Police as allies we build social capital and create the conditions for a mutually beneficial working relationship.

A few years ago, at Burning Man, one Sheriff was talking to the campmates of someone who had just been restrained two days into an intense psychedelic experience. They said "If you can find out where he got this stuff, don't tell us – we have to enforce the law. Tell the Black Rock Rangers and they'll see that it's handled appropriately." That kind of trust is invaluable.

### **How to Hand-Off**

The essential characteristic of a good handoff is efficiency: in only a few sentences, get across the critical information to begin documentation and care for the case.

It a combination of:

- how to identify the case for the records, and
- what are the facts that will be important for their continued care?

For example:

- name (at least first or playa);
- age (as best you know it);
- how they came into care (what channel / location / source);
- the chief complaint / problem and

- finish with any important supporting details like camp location and medication status.

You should expect that, and request it when needed from others. This will build professional trust between organisations.

## **Documentation**

The Green Dot team log is an invaluable resource later in the week when we see participants who are part of an evolving situation. Relatively few crises are fully resolved in just a few hours. It is also helpful post-event as we plan and budget. The Green Dot Lead is responsible for collecting the records for each shift, and the Head Ranger will take them for inclusion in the Incident Log and longer-term tracking between shifts and days.

Each participant a Green Dot has a more-than-trivial interaction with should be captured on one of the Green Dot forms. These are available in Ranger HQ, or Sanctuary.

There is a privacy release form for Sanctuary guests – as soon as practical, get this signed early in someone's stay as it allows us to tell their friends, family, or campmates about how to find them and what happened to them. Without this, privacy restrictions can get in the way of what would otherwise be sensible.

You will practice completing documentation during the face-to-face training.

## **Becoming A Green Dot**

This role is only open to currently trained Jilakin Rock Rangers in good standing, or new Rangers with a background in counseling, psychology, or altered states.

Any Rangers who have interest in the role and take the face-to-face training are welcome to be mentored for the team.

Returning team members are expected to take a refresher course every year to stay current on policies and practices, and help support the growth of newer team members.

Any Ranger who demonstrates difficulty in working appropriately on the team may be removed by the consensus of the Head Ranger and Ranger Leadership Group.

New members who are just joining the team will be asked to ride along with a designated team mentor to both let us get to know them, and them to get to know the live practice of the team's functions.

When the mentor and Head Ranger agree that they are up to speed to coordinate with the rest of the team as a full member, the Ranger will be given a Green Dot patch, their records updated and the Ranger can introduce themselves as a Green Dot any time they're willing and able to take on the work.

**Final note**

There is no single way. This is an art within an art, and relies on some of our deepest skills to succeed. Get support from your other Rangers – the point of the team is to have others who can help. A particular situation may need diverse, and changing, skills and characteristics to resolve well. Take care of your own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual state. Green Dots help not only the participants, but each other and any other Ranger who is overwhelmed by their participation at the Blaze.

Thank you for your service Ranger, see you at the face-to-face training