

Clothing Swap Tool Kit

This tool kit is designed to provide you with some basic steps you can take to set up and run a small clothing swap event.

Clothing swaps provide participants an opportunity to refresh their wardrobes in a sustainable, affordable way by exchanging donating articles. They can be run as large community events or in smaller, more intimate gatherings between friends, family, and/or colleagues.

This tool kit is meant to provide general guidance to support individuals looking to run a small event. The best way to enjoy planning clothing swap is to make the event your own, so take what works for you and your group and have fun with it!

Ground Rules

The ground rules you set for your event should help define expectations for your participants and should help control the scope of your swap.

Ground rules should define:

- What kinds of items will be swapped (clothing articles, accessories, jewelry, bags, etc.)
- Rules for participation (Do participants need to donate items in order to take items?)
- Limits on how many articles an individual can take (if any)

Tips!

When deciding on your ground rules consider:

- ✓ How much work are you able to put in? This event should be fun for you too!
- ✓ If you accept accessories, consider what you will do with any leftover at the end of the event. Do you have a nonprofit willing to accept donated accessories? If so, who will transport them?
- ✓ Many hands make lighter work! For small events asking participants to put out their own clothes helps reduce the work involved in setting up and gives people an early opportunity to check out what is on offer as they lay out their own items on the tables.
- ✓ Some swap events require participants to swap items in a one-to-one ratio (i.e. take an item leave an item). Other events have open participation for anyone interested in free clothing. For a small swap that's intended to be fun and laid back, you may want to consider having as few rules to enforce as possible.

Pick a Recipient for Leftovers

When the swap is over, there will likely be a substantial pile of leftover items that need to be dealt with. This is a great opportunity to give back to the community. There are many nonprofit and community organizations that accept donations of gently used clothing. There are also some organizations that accept tarnished clothing for recycling.

When scoping out your options, keep the BCA in mind! The BCA holds Community Closet events and may accept donations if there is a future event scheduled.

Tips!

- ✓ Some organizations require you to make an appointment for dropping off donations. Make sure to contact the organization you plan to donate to in order to ensure they are ready for and able to accept your items

Choose a Date and Time

Choose a date for your swap! Swaps typically take a few hours. Some swaps will run over the course of an afternoon in order to allow participants to drop-in freely.

Tips!

- ✓ Aligning swap dates with changes in seasonal clothing is a great way to encourage participation in your swap. As people review their closets for the coming season, they will be more likely to have items to donate AND be aware of the items they are soon going to need.

Your Guest List

Define the participants you want to engage, keeping in mind the donations they are likely to bring. You want to get as much variety at your swap as possible to give people lots of options to choose from.

Tips!

- ✓ Swaps are great places to meet new people in a smaller setting. What better way to try something new than to swap with someone whose style you have yet to learn!
- ✓ Ideally, you want to have to move as little leftover items at the end of your event as possible, which means you need more engagement rather than less

Your Location

A swap can be held almost anywhere – a workplace, your home, the home of a friend. You want a place that will have enough space to display clothes and allow people to wonder around. Clothes don't have to be laid out on tables. They can be draped across chairs and couches too!

Tips

- ✓ If you are the one organizing the swap, it may be helpful to find a friend willing to host the event
- ✓ A location with a relaxed atmosphere may encourage people to be more adventurous. You want people to chat and try things on together – this way the swap can become a social event.

Basic Checklist

- Determine Ground Rules
- Identify date for swap
- Identify an organization/individual willing to take leftover items
- Plan transportation and drop off of leftover items
- Determine location for swap
- Send invitations
- Optional: Food and drink!