Microsolidarity Crews in the Deep Adaptation Forum: An experiment

Voir ici *pour la version française.*



Art by Anni C. Brink. See more of her work on Instagram at @newworldofequity or on her site equitykingdom.com

How can we cultivate more trust and solidarity with more humans in our networks? How can we join forces to take regenerative action in the world? What if Love stands at the heart of all this?

Starting in **April 2022**, Deep Adaptation Forum (DAF) participants are invited to explore these questions by forming microsolidarity "crews." See here to read the session reports from our April 2 online open space event on this topic.

Are you interested in starting or joining a crew? Check out the online Crew Finder to see what crews are "recruiting" - and invite people to join your own!

This is an experiment. Can we pull it off? Do we have the wisdom to be more supportive of one another? Will we stick around to learn new skills and ways of working together? Let's find out.

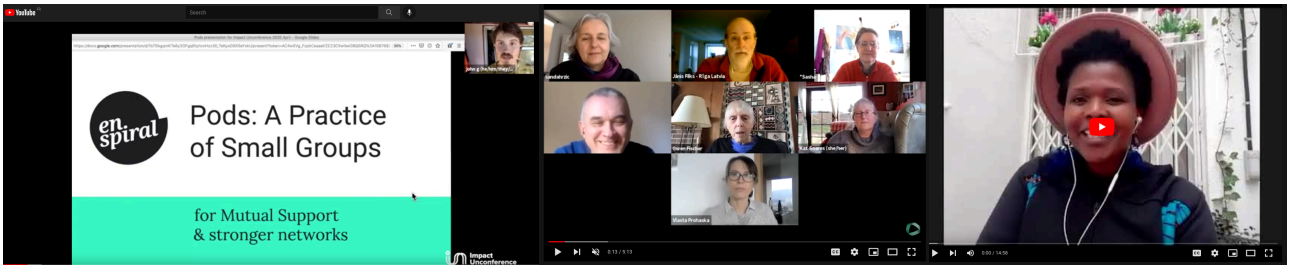
What's a crew?

A crew is a small, self-organised group (about 3-5 people) who meet regularly, support one another, build trust, have fun, and sometimes work on common projects.

The concept comes from the Microsolidarity framework, put forth by R. Bartlett from the Enspiral network. Several variations on the theme are also being experimented with around the world, from pods to squads, gangs, etc.

Introductory videos:

- *Check out **this one** for a good introduction to the concept of pods/crews, by John Gieryn and Nancy Gibson from Enspiral;*
- *This ten-minute video by Rich Bartlett: "**A Roadmap for High-Trust Communities**"*
- ***This interview** of Rich Bartlett on the Rebel Wisdom channel, in which he gives a clear introduction to the philosophy of Microsolidarity;*
- ***This one** by the DAF Collaborative Action team, in which the members describe some benefits they have drawn from their group;*
- *and **this other video**, in which members of the DAF Diversity and Decolonising circle document some of their practices - which are similar to those of crews or pods.*



Many DAF participants have expressed an interest in networking with others locally, engaging in ongoing mutual support, and collaborating on meaningful projects, so we expect most crews to fall into these categories - but there are no constraints as to what a crew is about.

Why crews?

The Deep Adaptation Forum is about cultivating mutual emotional support in the face of our predicament. It is also about softening the crash of modern civilisation, regenerating social fabrics and ecosystems, and engaging in regenerative collective action. We think crews are possibly a critical part of the equation.

As Rich Bartlett, who came up with the "Microsolidarity" framework, puts it:

> *"Over the past 7 years of working with people who are trying to make the world a safer, fairer, healthier place, I've concluded that membership in a good Crew is a critical success factor. **People enmeshed in really great Crews are most resilient to the psychological cost of doing social change work, and therefore the most able to***

> ***think and act strategically. It's at this small scale that we decontaminate each other, recover from the individualist virus, and start to learn a new way of being together."***

Crews can also be a powerful way to cultivate discernment and sense-making in an increasingly confusing world:

> *"I make sense of a phenomenon by considering how my peers respond to it. If I know them very well, and I know myself well, I can interpolate the meaning of an event from the scattered data of my peers' reactions.* ***My stable membership in a few Crews gives me great confidence in my ability to make sense of this chaotic world."***

Finally… Those of us in DAF who are already part of long-lasting crews (which we sometimes call "circles" or "task groups" etc.) can testify to how transformative they can be (see below!).

How do crews form?

Anyone can start a crew, anytime, anywhere - it's just about reaching out to a few people, and deciding to meet regularly!

Within DAF, however, we want to encourage crews to form simultaneously and be in touch, in order to facilitate mutual support and learning. On April 2, 2022, DAF participants are invited to get together as the first "congregation" - in other words, as a bunch of people interested in forming crews on various topics.

The same congregation will be invited to get back together 6 months later, in October 2022, share their learnings… and form new crews (or stick to their existing ones!). In the meantime, anyone is free to put out a call for a new crew using the online Crew Finder.

What are the time commitments?

Every crew is free to decide how often they want to meet, for how long, and how to stay in touch in between meetings. In DAF and elsewhere, crews seem to favour meeting on a weekly or fortnightly basis, for 60 to 90 minutes.

Within the "Crewing in DAF" experiment, we encourage crews to try and keep meeting for at least 6 months. But nothing prevents a crew from disbanding if chemistry is not working! (This is best decided during a "retrospective" call - see below.)

How do crews spend their time together?

Again, this really depends on every crew. At the very least, we encourage each crew to…

- Clarify a shared intention for meeting, early on
- Establish protocols/values/norms/boundaries that the group finds important

- Define a meeting rhythm
- Schedule regular reflection calls

Useful meeting practices tend to include:

- Check-ins at the start of each call, and check-outs at the end
- Rotating meeting roles (e.g. facilitators, note-takers, vibe-watchers…)
- If necessary, maintaining a shared note-taking document (particularly useful for projects!)

A number of other very useful meeting structures and processes (or "rituals"), tried and tested by many crews around the world, may help a group to spend meaningful time together. See these resource pages for some inspiration:

- Enspiral Pods - List of rituals
- LessWrong - Experimenting with Microsolidarity Crews
- Microsolidarity - Crewing
- Presencing Institute - Case Clinic

Curious about what it feels like to be in a crew? What practices tend to work? Check out **this video** from the DAF Diversity & Decolonising Circle, who have learned a lot from their experience!

An important practice that we encourage crews to adopt is that of **scheduling regular reflection (or "retrospective") calls**, for example every 3 months. These calls can be important ways for the crew to reflect on what is working (or not!), whether anything needs to be tweaked, whether the group wants to keep going, etc.

How are crews supported in DAF?

Crews are expected to be self-organised and as autonomous as possible. But don't worry, we won't leave you stranded! A "crewing support team" is being set up in DAF, in order to provide some level of assistance and coordination to the crewing process. For example:

- All crew initiators will be invited to join the monthly DAF Volunteer Community calls to mutually support one another and discuss their challenges. If the timing doesn't work for everyone, the support team can help folks identify a better meeting time, but hosting should be done by participants themselves.
- Every crew will be provided with useful resources on how to get their group off the ground, and keep going.
- Crew initiators can also be paired, if they wish, with experienced DAF volunteers for buddying/peer support.
- Crews will have access to OpenCollective, the DAF project funding platform, in case they decide to take on project organising.

An online CREW FINDER is available for people to advertise their crew idea, and find each other. NB: If you add an idea to that list, please remember to tag (in a comment) a Core Team or

Editorial Team member, so we can broadcast your intention to others in DAF through the Inside DAF newsletter!

Where can I learn more about Microsolidarity and crewing?

Here are some useful resources:

- Microsolidarity - Crewing
- Pods - Enspiral Handbook (about the pods at Enspiral, which are similar to crews)
- The Five Scales of Microsolidarity
- Leadership as Hospitality
- How to Weave Social Fabric
- This great podcast episode with some of the Enspiral people who developed the concept of pods / crews
- Experimenting with Microsolidarity Crews
- Michal Korzonek's microsolidarity journey
- Of Pods, Squads, Crews, and Gangs - Small Group Experiments in Radical Belonging