extinction rebellion

A Toolkit of Deep Collaboration Practices

Open the google doc outline at the sidebar to navigate between sections easily.

Introduction

This toolkit is a collection of useful collaboration practices, all of which are aligned and expanding on both the principles & values and the constitution. They are options, not a prescription, and you don't need to read them all :) If you sense a gap in your group of how you are structured, make decisions, give feedback, handle conflict, distribute money or support each-other, turn to the relevant place in the toolkit and see if anything might help. When you find a practice, adapt it to your context, experiment with it and if it's useful, establish it as a systemic group agreement.

The ecological catastrophe is a result of the dominant ways in which the human family is currently organised from a place of scarcity, separation, powerlessness and domination. When we do not *consciously* choose how to be together, we risk inheriting the automatic practices of this dominant culture. When we do not *collectively* choose how to be together, we abandon change to be dependent on individual initiative. These practices are a way to walk towards the vision of co-liberation: cultivating our interdependence, belonging, power-with and freedom.

1. Structure & system design practices

1.1. Defining purpose

When a circle's purpose is not clear, effectiveness goes down, and when its common purpose with other circles is not clear, collaboration goes down: decision making and information flow between the different parts become much more complicated and challenging. When we are clear about purpose & domains it starts to feel like everything has its place and everything is working together as one coherent whole. When we can see how our purpose connects to our vision then we can feel inspired to take bold and imaginative leaps.

Let's imagine a regional "Regenerative Cultures" group, with the following purpose:
"Supporting the emergence and embodiment of regenerative cultures, for the better care of self, actions, people, community and planet."

Try to revise it with these guidelines:
Think of your purpose as a *project* of closing the gap between what is happening and what is needed. Try writing your purpose in this formula:
- What is happening, and it's impact
- What is specifically needed, and what it would serve.

Let's look at an example of a revised purpose:
- *"When local groups are lacking tools for working sustainably with care to self and to others, there is burnout, conflict and less effective action.*
- *Our purpose is to embed supportive and listening practices in every local group in our region so rebels could stay activated, energised and with a sense of belonging for the long term."*

What can we learn from this revised purpose statement?:

- **It clarifies who we serve:**
  In the above example: we serve our local groups ! This is one of the key things to clarify for self organisation to work well - we need to know who we serve, and be connected to the impact of our work. When we can feel the joy of when we are delivering value and the sadness when we are not, we have the internal motivation to act. Otherwise we will experience separation and confusion, and be much more likely to be caught up in unimportant things. Even "serving the movement" is not nearly specific enough.

- **It clarifies how we serve them:**
  This clarity immediately tells us what type of skills we need and what type of infrastructure we need in order to deliver value. In the above example, it's clear this group needs to connect to the training and coaching infrastructure, otherwise their chances of embedding practices in every local group are slim.

- **It clarifies why we do it:**
  When we add the background context of what is currently happening and its impact, it illustrates the gap that motivates us into action, and it is much clearer why we need to do what we do.

- **It clarifies our progress:**
  When our purpose is framed as the gap or tension between what is happening and what is needed, it gives us clear guidelines to see if we are indeed progressing towards the purpose, and if our work is still needed. This is an indication if a circle needs to be reborn or dissolved and composted.

The same type of issues are prevalent in purpose statements of super-circles. When super-circles are defined vaguely around abstract concepts, the collaboration between the sub-circles suffers. Their shared meetings get stuck and revolve mostly around updates and general discussions. A shared purpose statement needs to give a clear idea of the collective project the sub-circles have to collaborate over (and change the structure accordingly for it to make sense). Then meetings become about seeing that things are moving well, that everything has its place and to remove impediments to movement.

1.2. Creating and linking circles

Here are useful principles for designing an SOS structure. When you want to create a sub-circle in a parent circle, consider the following principles:

- **Check for fit.** Before creating a new circle, check to see if it makes sense.
  Is the new circle needed? Does it have a *compelling* need to exist in order to achieve our own overall purpose? meaning, is it *ours* to do? Might it be better placed somewhere else or within an existing circle? Or might it be duplicating something that already exists? If you are in the UK wide layer, consider if what you are thinking of belongs at the UK wide layer as a circle, or maybe it needs to be incorporated as a training for regions and local groups. If the new circle doesn't have a very *compelling* fit: don't create it. You can try and add the needed function to an existing circle if necessary.

- **Aim for 3-6 circles in a super-circle.** It's hard to know what is the best number of circles, but be aware that more circles come with a cost. When a supercircle becomes too big it's hard for it to function, and for the sub-circles to collaborate. If half of the people in a meeting are bored for half of the meeting, then placing some of the circles in their own super-circle might be useful (within the current supercircle or outside of it). The right number of circles is perfect when *every* agenda item in *every* meeting is relevant to *every* person in the room *for their own work*. Before doing this - make sure the circle is a good "fit" and whether other circles reached their end-of-life cycle, and might benefit from merging or dissolving.

- **Set a clear mandate.** A mandate is made out of a clear purpose (see: defining purpose), domain and accountabilities. When setting a mandate, it's important to consider the type of circle (see: understanding the type of circle). It is best to give a circle the most autonomy possible in deciding how to fulfil its purpose, but when needed for clarity, guidance and accountability, detail in "accountabilities" the deliverables as well as constraints and governing policy, e.g. "Publishing strategy according to [this template] and consultation with [these circles] by [this date]".

- **Aim for 5-7 people in a circle.** Each extra person makes decision making more complicated, and adds to the web of relationships to maintain. e.g. a circle of 7 rebels has

21 relationships between them to maintain, while a circle of 10 people has 45 relationships to maintain.

- **Select an initial coordinator, or a point person.** In order to get a circle going, a super-circle can select coordinators to hold it and grow it in the first phase of its existence (e.g. 2 months). This is useful especially if the circle does not have enough members yet. If the circle already has enough members, you can just make sure that a point person in the circle is tasked with initiating a selection process of coordinators.

- **Use double linking if appropriate.** If you are in an anchor circle, and it makes sense for your context, have the sub-circles double-link to the supercircle. Double linking means two rebels from the subcircle are members of the supercircle. It has few advantages:
    - It widens and improves the information flow between circles.
    - It builds more relationships between circles.
    - It gives a more diverse representation for the sub-circle. It is also useful to name one link as tasked with carrying information from the supercircle to the subcircle, and the other link as tasked with representing the needs of the subcircle in the supercircle. In this way, abuse of power is much less likely. Sometimes one coordinator can be stuck between different needs of the supercircle and the subcircle, and they might give up on one of them…

1.3. Understanding the type of group

When creating a circle or designing a structure, consider if it would be useful to define it

- **For working groups, consider whether you need a function circle or a cross-functional circle.**
  One way of defining teams is by function. Traditional business structures might have a sales department, a design department, a manufacturing department, etc. They are divided by their function, and all of them attempt to take care of all the products and customers.

  Self-organising companies realised that this structure requires a lot of coordination between departments, while each department is a bit in the dark: they can only see their part of the process. Most departments are left disconnected from who they are serving, reducing their self-organising capabilities (You self-organise when you see the impact of your work, and care about it being beneficial).

  Some of those organisations switch to cross-functional teams. Meaning, each team has at least one person from each function of sales, design, manufacturing, etc - and each team takes responsibility over specific products / customers or geographical areas. In this way, the need for coordination between teams can be reduced, as each such team has all it needs within it to fully and directly serve their customers.

  When applying this in the movement, consider if organising in this way can support the issues you are seeing. For example, imagine regional working circles trying to support local groups and their culture, with talks & trainings, SOS, regenerative cultures and more. These working circles are defined and divided by function. Now imagine a cross-functional regional support circle, in which you will find SOS rebels, Regenerative cultures rebels, Talks & training rebels, etc. Then all of the functions can be connected to the local groups through one team that is taking collective responsibility for their overall health. It might also be more scalable, as you can always add more of these circles when more local groups appear, instead of a working circle needing to serve 50 local groups that they don't even have direct connection with, ending up not serving anyone.

- **Consider whether it's a regular working circle or a help desk (support circle).** A working circle produces work themselves. A help desk is there to be available and support other circles in doing their work. For example, a UK-wide legal circle might decide it is a help desk for legal advice, but will not take care of legal matters themselves.

- **Consider whether it's a working circle or an ad-hoc helping team.** A helping team is a temporary group made ad-hoc to help with a specific task. It needs a clear purpose and authority like any circle (e.g. are they entrusted to make the decision or only come up with a proposal?). With a helping team, it is especially important to:
  - Assign a coordinator and point person to move it forward, who's clear on the purpose and task. Otherwise their set-up time might take too long.
  - Assign a term (time limit) to the team, detailing when they need to be done or deliver their work. Otherwise, they might drag on too long.
  - Leave the team out of the official structure. Otherwise they might drift into becoming a regular circle that sends coordinators to the supercircle and will add noise to the structure.

- **Supercircles are about sorting out systems, conditions and uniting plans.** Supercircles are the coordination space between different working circles. They don't need to do work themselves, and they don't need to be only about updates. They need to build the systems and agreements that enable their sub-circles to achieve their shared purpose. (see: Attending to tensions between circles systematically).

- **Local groups and XR communities are a form of community and not a circle.** As such, they need less emphasis on strict SOS, and more emphasis on local grassroots community organising, that is focused on active outreach, relational onboarding, creating strong relationships and building commitment, retention and organisers through that. You can check out this local orgainsing primer.

1.4. Building conditions systematically

This practice and guidelines are relevant within a circle as well, but the explanation is focused on situations across-circles.

The aspiration within a supercircle is to have almost all issues attended to by the work done in the sub-circles. The role of the supercircle is to attend to tensions, gaps in conditions and impediments to work that live *across-circles* or do not get attended to at the sub-circle level. That means:

- Bringing parallel projects together, see they are in sync and collaborating where needed, and prioritise them when they rely on the same resources.
- Creating the conditions that enable the sub-circles to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty. It involves attending to gaps in conditions *systematically*, meaning - in a way that will answer the question - *how do we want to attend to these gaps & types of issues*

now and in the future? In this approach we lay down the infrastructure or agreements that will sort out how to attend to any future similar tensions.

Let's take a hypothetical example: Actions circle released a packet of materials in the movement broadcast channel before a rebellion. Tensions arose with other circles that sit within the same supercircle that were not happy with their lack of involvement. Other tensions arose with regional coordinators that said that most of the information is not relevant to local groups, and in the overload of information the important parts are getting lost.

When attending to the tension, we can use the following checklist of 5 organisational systems:

- **Decision making:** *Who decides what, in what process, with whose input?*

In this example, there might have been different perspectives about who has a mandate over sending the rebellion packet. This can be sorted by the supercircle for any future instance, in these possible ways:

    - Understanding what would most serve the common purpose and decide the mandate sits with Actions circle / with other circles / with the supercircle / splitting different parts between circles.
    - Making a guiding policy that says that action packets need to gather input from a few circles.
    - Making a list of considerations for the deciding circle to go through, before releasing packets, like:
        - Consider any legal implications, and guidance that needs to be given
        - Consider any wellbeing support that needs to be integrated
        - Consider using the simplest language, and focus only on what local groups need to know before coming to rebellion.

- **Information flow:** *What information gets where, and how?*

The supercircle can decide that before sending rebellion packets, it is announced to several circles.

- **Feedback flow:** *Who gives feedback to who, when, and about what?*

The supercircle can create a feedback agreement, in which we agree that action packets get feedback from a regional coordinator before going out.

- **Resource flow:** *What resources flow where, and how?*

The supercircle can decide that materials will not go to the entire movement, as it might be overwhelming and not effective as one size fits all, but will be sent to the regional action groups that will be supported to adapt it to local context, needs and language.
The supercircle might also realise that Actions circle has too much to do and it doesn't have capacity to attend to external requests. Then the question becomes - how do we support Actions circle to increase its capacity?

- **Conflict engagement:** *How do we want to respond to conflict?*

The tensions between circles might have erupted into a conflict that then escalated. The supercircle might attend to this by agreeing that we want to initiate a mutual understanding conversation, with proper facilitation, the next time a conflict arises.

2. Decision making practices

The beauty of the concept we hold for decision making, is that we want to consent together to *how we work together,* so we can operate more autonomously and with flow between meetings. In this way we cultivate co-liberatory power-with as well as freedom. We are setting our own rules of the game, so we can enjoy playing it together in a way that serves us and our purpose and moves us further towards our shared vision. Any distribution of authority to a role, any creation of a new sub-circle, and any policy we set that guide how we do things, can come as a proposal by anyone, and is accepted by the consent of the circle's members.

We are not against any way of organising, as long as it serves our purpose, values and vision. We can have a project manager if this is what we need to move forward, as long as they operate within a mandate that was given to them by the group, and can also be taken away. In fact, many groups find that project coordination roles are extremely helpful.

2.1. Mapping decision-making

The idea of roles is that as much as possible of the work can be done autonomously by circle members who are entrusted and accountable over a certain purpose. Yet it's not always easy to know how to effectively divide the work into roles. Even after we do that, it's not always easy to trust people to appropriately listen to others and take into account their needs when making decisions.

If you find the same sorts of decisions or issues coming up and taking the circle's time, consider making a role or a policy for it. In this sense it's helpful to think of roles as entrusted to make certain types of recurring decisions. Then those types of decisions can be mapped using a simple table. This mapping helps a circle increase clarity and autonomy in their decision making system, and also find glaring gaps that need a role or a policy to handle and blurry areas that need more clarity:

Type of decisions	**Who decides**	**Who's input**	**According to what criteria / policy + term date**	**Who gets notified**
Adding new members	Anyone autonomously	By decider's judgement	Membership policy *term date: ….*	Circle members
Coordination of project "Y"	Kali	By decider's judgement	• Role description • Role development process at half term *term date: ….*	Project members
Responding to messages	Messages response team	By decider's judgement	Messaging channel user policy & criteria *term date: ….*	Available in this doc for everyone to see.
Scheduling trainings	Paul	Available trainers	Be attuned to trainers feedback. *term date: ….*	Available trainers
Integrating feedback	Julie, Mary	Circles impacted by	Role description *term date: ….*	Circle members, feedback givers

about trainings.		our work: ...		

* All underlined sections would link to bookmarks in the same document, containing the relevant policy or role description. A "common resource policy" is useful to make for circles operating a common resource (like a broadcast channel of the movement) to clarify the circumstances and criteria for how rebels outside the circle can access the resource. (when, for what, in what way…)

2.2. Advice process agreement

The advice process is a *governance agreement* that says anyone in the organisation can make a decision, given they follow the following process:

a. Someone notices a problem or opportunity and takes the initiative, or alerts someone better placed to do so.
b. Prior to a proposal, the decision-maker may seek input to sound out perspectives before proposing action. The decision-maker explains that they are initiating an advice process.
c. The initiator makes a proposal and seeks advice from:
    - those meaningfully affected by the decision
    - those with the relevant knowledge, experience or expertise.
      Consider different forms of expertise - some come from life experience, some from professional experience. Notice if you tend to favour one type over another - both have value. Also note humans have cognitive weaknesses of favouring advice that suits their own position and thinking they "know" something when they may only have part of a picture.
    - Those who have needed resources for implementation, or could interfere with the effectiveness of implementation.
d. Taking this advice into account, the decision-maker decides on an action and informs those who have given advice. If you ask for advice and choose not to take it- think clearly about why not and share your thinking. This may help maintain trust when there is disagreement.

The advice process is not only a consultation process, it is a *possible governance agreement* that if *consented to* invests decision making power in the individual, even if they don't have a role and mandate, as long as they follow the process. Of course, consultation in the manner found in the advice process is a good practice for every impactful decision, even if you have the mandate to decide yourself.

The process works well when people have close enough engagement with each other that they take their responsibility seriously, they care about the feedback of those around them, and they remember they would equally like to be heard and respected when taken advice from.

Consider implementing the advice process within your circle, as the default for all of the decisions made within the circle. Meaning, any types of decisions not yet delegated to a role, a sub-circle or governed by a policy, circle members are free to make, as long as they are following the advice process. Basically, it's adding the following as the last line of the decision mapping table:

Type of decisions	Who decides	Who's input	According to what criteria / policy + term date	Who gets notified

All other decisions	Anyone autonomously	Those impacted, and those who hold relevant knowledge and expertise	Advice process *term date: ...*	Those consulted

This process grows leadership as well as responsibility. It is also very flexible. Different circles will be in different parts of the spectrum of how many types of decisions they are delegating to roles, and how many they are leaving to the advice process. If needed, roles can be created with a guiding accountability to follow the advice process themselves for some key decisions, or make decisions with key considerations in mind.

Move at the speed of trust. If it's implemented successfully in circles, and more trust is built, it might be implemented in supercircles or whole sections of the organism.

2.3. Wise proposal making

When there's a need to decide on a solution to an issue, and there's no immediately obvious way forward, use [this template] to build proposals that harness collective wisdom. This process can be done as a group during a meeting, or asynchronously through the google doc template. The process contains these steps:

- Articulate the tension you are wanting to respond to.
- Understand who are the most appropriate decision makers for this decision. It might be a specific role, a specific circle, a supercircle or a combination of circles that need to collaborate and thus consent. If the tension will be best addressed by someone else, pass it to them with a request to address it or with a suggestion to build a proposal for them.
- Identify needed stakeholders besides the decision makers. Who will be meaningfully impacted by the decision, and who has the needed expertise or resources to make it happen?
- Collect considerations from stakeholders.
- Collect proposal pieces. Do this after the collection of considerations is done (good enough for now). It can be whole proposal ideas or just pieces of a proposal that address only one or more aspects of it.
- Write a proposal in a group of 2-3 people, using the template of a proposal. While you can collect information from many people, synthesise it in small groups. More than 3 and it becomes ineffective. If the issue is very controversial make sure the synthesising group contains that controversy (meaning you have people from either perspective).
- Pass it through the appropriate decision making circle.

2.4. Integrating objections and concerns

For consent decision making to work well, and be different than consensus, we need two things:

A. A collective understanding of when we want to object.

When the group doesn't have an understanding of when to object, they might elongate the process over preferences or things that are not substantial to the shared purpose

It is recommended to repeat the meaning of an objection to an untrained group. e.g: “Does anyone see or sense a way in which this proposal will cause harm to our shared purpose?” “Even if this is not perfect and not your preference, does anyone see or sense a reason that this is not *good enough for now, and safe enough to try?”*

Furthermore, if group members are not skilled in calibrating within themselves what counts as an objection and what doesn’t, it’s helpful to add another “state” in the consent round, called “concern”. This way people are less torn between not speaking and objecting.

- Consent (can be indicated with a thumb up) = even if this is not my preference, it is not causing harm to our shared purpose. It’s good enough for now and safe enough to try.
- Concern (can be indicated with a wobbly hand) = this is still consent, but I have a concern and I want to name it so it can be in our consciousness, and have it attended to depending on time and resources.
- Objection (can be indicated with a palm spread open, as presenting a gift) = I see a reason this can cause harm to our shared purpose, and it’s not good enough for now or safe enough to try. I need us to integrate this wisdom to prevent the harm.

Before the process you make sure people understand that the concern option is still consent. Meaning, if we have no objections - we first celebrate making the decision! If time allows, by the facilitator's judgement, we can listen to the concerns and attend to them by support, small tweaks, or naming them as considerations while implementing and evaluation criteria. If they only want their concerns named but not addressed in the group time, naming them in the “quick reaction” round is enough.

B. Being skilled at integrating objections.

When there aren’t enough skills of integrating objections, they are viewed similarly to blocks or vetos, and then people are reacting to them with aversion. When that happens, pressure is exerted on objectors to align themselves, which tends to make them more tight and protective, thus making the entire process longer and more painful.

The best way to feel comfortable and relaxed about objections is to learn and practice how to integrate them well. After successful practice, people understand how objections are not a block, and how walking towards them adds value while being quicker than any other way. When decision making processes convey to participants that they matter and their needs are included and considered, it builds trust. When they don’t, they decrease trust or limit its ability to grow.

Here are the steps for facilitators:

- Relax. You are responsible for the process, not for the solution. It’s not on you. trust that the group will get there if pressure is not applied.
- “Qualify” the objection:
    - This means to get to clarity *with the objector.* Thank them for speaking up!
    - Walk towards the objector with curiosity about what matters to them and how it relates to the circle’s purpose. Try to understand not their preference, but the thing that they can’t live with, the potential harm, and what is the crucial need that is not being met there.
    - You can check with the group: *“can you nod if you relate to this argument?”*.
    - If others don’t see the reasoning as an objection, and neither do you, suggest that this might better fit as a concern. If it holds as an objection:

- Sometimes being heard and providing clarity about the proposal resolves the objection. Otherwise, Invite amendment ideas from the objector, without it being their responsibility to come up with something (they are just more likely to know what will attend to their objection/concern). If they don't know, take ideas from:
  - Those who made the proposal
  - Yourself as facilitator
  - Popcorn or round from the circle, e.g *"Any ideas of how to attend to this need … within our proposal?"*
- Refrain from any discussions, convincing or applying pressure on the objector. That tends to result in more tightness. When the objector doesn't need to protect what matters to them, they relax and are much more open to different possibilities.
- Amend proposal, by:
  - Changing it's content
  - Shortening the term: e.g *"Is it safe enough to try for 2 months?"*
  - Making a measurement term: e.g *"Can we get a red flag email if at any point the visitor count at the website plummets below 80% of average?"*
- Check for consent again. If there's no more time, delegate to two people, (for example: to the objector and the person bringing the proposal) to come back with an amended proposal for the next meeting that can work for everyone.
- Remember: It is ok to drop a proposal, if we can establish a collective understanding that it is too costly for the group, or that the time isn't ripe yet.

2.5. Focused Meetings

Check out this meeting minutes template and read the comments that explain in more detail why each section exists. You can use this template by making a copy, modify it as needed, or take any components you find valuable. It is designed to create clarity and help to use the valuable resource of meeting time well. Here are some of additional points:

- **Having a known facilitator:**
  When a person is trusted by the circle *in advance* to facilitate, even if it is only for a few sessions, they bring more of themselves into it, and the circle is benefited by more stability, continuity, preparedness, focus and purposefulness of the facilitator. Good facilitation can make a night-and-day difference in your meetings (the ability of facilitation to harvest diversity into magic and effectiveness was mentioned a few times in the Systems Realignment needs analysis) Make the effort and select a facilitator or two for your next two months, for example. It is advised to have a facilitator that is not one of the coordinators, as this distributes power. Encourage the facilitator to learn some facilitation skills. With time, those can spread in the whole group.

- **Starting on time:**
  The start of a meeting takes time anyway. When people know a meeting starts on time, they tend to be less late.

- **Naming the qualities you want to guide you in this meeting:**
  Simply naming qualities you want to guide you in this meeting can make a lot of difference in keeping focus on what matters. For example, when we are facing a tense decision, we might find it useful to be reminded of trust, playfulness and service. Regen reminders or co-liberation body practices can also be good ways to embody these qualities. Check if the

group actually owns the practice, and that it doesn't become a "thing" you do without any heart or willingness.

- **Consent to purpose of meeting and to agenda:**
At the beginning of each meeting, present the purpose of the meeting and the planned agenda (or the agenda after you co-create it on the spot) and check for consent, e.g: "Is the agenda good enough for now for us to take collective responsibility over it?". This is how a circle takes collective responsibility over what they will invest their time in. The facilitator can remind the group of the consented agenda when they side-track. It creates more focus, purposefulness, and less situation of people being disengaged because their issues have not come up.

- **Clarifying the purpose of agenda items:**
Before going into a new agenda item, clarify what we want to get out of it. Is the purpose to "Understand/Update/Report"? This means we are not going into discussion or decisions, only to clarifying questions. Is the purpose to "Explore/Collect input/Feedback/Discuss" if so, we want to understand the issue and then collect relevant information that has not yet been named. Or is the purpose to "Decide"? If so, we want to understand the issue/proposal, collect input, and make a decision. Being clear on these greatly helps the circle and facilitator to stay on course.

- **Delegate outside of the meeting:**
Anything that doesn't require everyone's time can be delegated to be done outside of the meeting. For example, after collecting considerations for a proposal or discussion about an issue, delegate the proposal writing to a small group of people to do outside of the meeting. The same if you need to integrate objections. If something falls into the domain of a role, let them take the input and make the decisions. Sometimes even if there isn't a relevant role, you can entrust the entire decision into the hands of one or two people.

- **Discussion culture:**
Pay attention to the tendency to perceive any time as discussion time. It easily pulls a meeting off track with people raising their hand in response throughout the meeting, and opening more "branches" in the discussion to respond to. This is why free flow discussion is sometimes inefficient, on top of skewing conversations to those more outspoken. What can be done by the facilitator, other than clarifying the purpose of agenda items, is to decide when is time for free-flow discussion, and have the default as no discussion. Other ways to enrich a discussion without free-flow:
    - Rounds: in small groups this is very efficient. Everyone relaxes knowing that they will be heard and the conversation stays on the same thread instead of repeatedly branching into different topics. After a round a facilitator can synthesise what they've heard.
    - Asking to hear only things that have not yet been heard.
    - Temperature check: "raise hand" or "show of fingers" to assess for example how a big group feels about a proposal.

2.6. Open selections

Consider calling it a "selection process" as "elections" usually lead people to think of majority rule and voting. What happens in this process is actually not about voting at all, but about gathering information in order to have a proposal that is good enough. It is advisable to avoid the concept of "voting" as it leads people to get stuck in adversarial majority reasoning (similarly changing "voting rights" to "circle membership" or "consent rights").

This process is detailed in [the constitution](), but needs some deeper explanation in order to be implemented well. Here are the tips for the different phases of the process:

- **Consent to role description and considerations:**

Come up with a very clear role description, and a list of desired considerations and criteria for the role holder. They can usually be prepared in advance, but if needed can also be harvested through a round in a meeting. Anyway check for consent before moving forward. Don't skip this. Clarity of roles is very important, and so is mentioning the needed qualities - like compassion and communication skills for roles that have access to a lot of power.

- **Nomination round, and then a change round:**

Circle members write down nominations *without* needing to limit themselves to any pool of people who said they want to do it (you can collect a list of people who want to do it from outside the circle, but leave it for those inside the circle). Otherwise, the process tends to filter out anyone who is introverted, or anyone that doesn't believe in themselves even though others do, or anyone not wanting to "compete" against others for a role. We don't want all of those people to be filtered out ! As an anecdote, for several years a blind girl was selected through this process to be the prime minister of the children parliament's of India, with many naming this process as the enabler.

So what is happening if not voting? It's only exploring options and collecting information in order to come up with a decent proposal. At the same time, it is a community building practice that can be incredibly touching and fueling - because it's basically rounds of appreciations !

- **Propose a proposal**

It doesn't have to be what the majority have selected, even though this is a good bet. Let the reasons you've heard be paramount. It's about trust, and just putting a good enough proposal out there. The facilitator can make a proposal, or they might delegate it to another person, or two people that were given a few minutes to discuss only between themselves.

- **Invite objections in a consent round.**

The person nominated is checked last for consent. This way they have a chance to see how much others believe in them before they decide. Even if they are unwilling, it's good to know the group wants you. This is not a waste of time for the group either, because now everyone has more information and a new proposal can be quickly presented. Because we are in a volunteer setting, it's advised to check with the person about their capacity and if they need any support.

Any objection, as usual, is not a block - it's information to work with: it might lead to sharing a role, or trying it for a shorter period of time with scheduled feedback, it might lead to an added accountability or constraining policy, and it might be about offering a certain type of support or training to the person filling the role. For example, let's say a proposal is on the table for someone to fill a coordination role, but they object because they did not consider themselves adequate and they are worried about work overload. Then the question is: How can we support you? Do you need to hear something from us? Can we take something off of you? Can we set you up with a coach or a training? Can we try it out for a month, and if you don't like it, we will switch to this person? Be creative :)

2.7. Choosing between options

If at any point you need to choose between discrete options, you can:

A. **Use the above selection process.** Define the purpose of the selection and the considerations, then let everyone nominate an option and give the reasons for it, like you would do with people filling a role. Go ahead with the process as is. This is good for situations where a bit of deliberation and reason sharing is needed.

B. **Do a willingness-based-vote.** Instead of using a majority vote, where everyone raises their hands only for their most prefered option, do a vote based on willingness where everyone raises their hand for each option that is good enough for now. Or, of course, you can also ask people to raise their hands for each option that they see as not good enough for now and safe enough to try. This way you quickly focus on the option with the least resistance and the most willingness. Then, you can improve the decision by integrating the resistance. If this is not a governance decision that requires consent, then you can integrate resistance only to the point that time and resources allow.

3. Feedback practices

Feedback helps us align our actions with our intentions and purpose, by bringing us information regarding the impact of our actions. Without this information, we cannot truly learn, develop, adapt, and navigate towards our purpose. When feedback is not flowing: given or received when it's alive, it tends to fester into conflict.

We tend to block or run away from feedback since it was traditionally given to us with judgement and punishment. We want to disassociate the two, so we can feel safe doing, and feel safe receiving feedback about it. As a small example, Google Aristotle is a research project initiated by Google, studying 180 teams and what makes them effective. What made the most difference was not the makeup of a team or its individuals and their talent, but how a team worked together, with "Psychological Safety" being the most important factor. They define this safety as the individual's perception that a team is safe for risk taking in the face of being seen as ignorant, incompetent, negative or disruptive.

3.1. Periodic feedback & Learning meetings

This might be the most important practice for working circles. XR UK circles have mostly one meeting a week to take care of updates, support, operational decisions, elections, policy setting, feedback within the group and connection. That's a LOT to do in such a small time frame, which means automatic tendencies of the group will decide what takes precedence.

Even with so few meetings, a periodic space to reflect about **how we want to work together** is crucial. By having a space to voice feedback about what works and doesn't work for us, we learn to establish group atmosphere and agreements that truly serve us and our shared purpose.

How does it work?

- You might start with a meeting in which you ask: How do we want to be working together? Specifically, make decisions, distribute roles, flow feedback and information, share resources and support, and engage with conflict? The practices in this manual can help with all of those.

- Make a feedback & learning agenda that works for you and schedule it periodically. We recommend doing it once a month. For supercircles, the agenda might involve a purpose & accountabilities review for circles. Within circles, you might want to use this outline from the TC team, or an outline made within Systems Realignment that integrated some ideas and concerns from F&LC, Co-lib and SOS. The important part is to dedicate purposefully time for feedback, navigation and governance.
- The meeting might include looking at these things:
    - Celebrations and gratitudes !
    - How we work together and do things - what serves us and what doesn't?
    - The level of capacity group members currently have, to hold a shared picture and support those who are overworking themselves.
    - Interpersonal tensions that require support to be dealt with regeneratively outside of the meeting.
    - Experiences of marginalisation or unconscious practices that reproduce oppression

.

How do these meetings help?

These meetings provide an excellent integration between those who want to get things done and those wanting to pause & reflect.

Firstly, having a feedback space gives a team a place to process its tensions, preventing resentment and full blown conflicts that bring a team to a halt.

Secondly, when people know they have a space to pause, reflect and deal with the relational aspect of their work, it frees the other meetings to be more purposeful.

Lastly, and most importantly, processing tensions about *how we work together* are one of the most important factors of successfully navigating towards purpose .Having it brings a sense of shared reality and of invisible weights being lifted and fog being cleared. It greatly increases the resilience of a team. Here are some examples:

- a person might voice their tension with a team-behavioural-pattern of investing most of meetings to connect, take breaks and support each other, leaving very little time to achieve an outcome outside of the circle.
- A tension might bring to light a common experience of struggle of the entire team that no one articulated until now, that might lead to a totally different way of working.
- A tension might highlight that an automatic direction of the work isn't effective, and that a change in direction is needed.
- A tension might just need voicing, without anything else changed, and the sense of being heard and having a place to exist prevents disgruntlement, resentment and future conflict. It also gives others the ability to support.

3.2. Attending to Co-Liberation

In this space we hear from people experiencing marginalisation and/or implicit bias, about their experiences. It might be feedback about behaviours, conditions, and ways of being, that make it hard for you to feel like you belong, or that signal to you that you should be a certain way, or that you are deserving of a different amount of care, because of your traits or identity: such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, capabilities, class or religion.

The purpose of the feedback is to grow our capacity to care for everyone and be aware of all needs. We listen openly and respond only with “thank you, I hear you.”

3.3. Tracking & reviewing decisions

One of the most important things to track in the [meeting minutes document] is the review date of any governance decisions of roles or policy. When we review decisions after a certain term, we keep them relevant and adaptive. Trusting that decisions will be reviewed is what allows people to expand their willingness and go for what is “good enough for now and safe enough to try”. If circle members don’t trust decisions will be revisited after a certain term, they are more likely to resist them than to trial them and get more information that way.

Write the review dates next to the backlog items. When an agenda is assembled, add in any reviews of decisions that their time has come. If a decision seems to work well, simply ask: “is there any objection / reason it’s not good enough to keep going with this for X months?”. If a deeper review is needed, go to a round of reflections of what works and what doesn’t and integrate it into a new proposal.

3.4. Feedback guidelines

We actively want to give, invite and receive feedback, with the purpose of learning about impacts our actions have, so we can better care for our **relationships**, our **P&Vs**, and **our purpose (of our roles, circle, supercircle or movement)**. We want to request for any needed supportive presence or facilitation so that the heart of the feedback could be heard and harnessed for learning. Take a look at this version from Feedback & Learning circle.

- **Setup:**
  - **When we give feedback:** we want to check with the person if they are available to receive feedback.
  - **When we receive feedback:** we want to let the other person know in case this is not a good time for us to hear feedback, because we are … [feeling sensitive, overwhelmed, defensive..] and we want to find a time in which we can be open to hear and receive.

- **Assumptions:**
  - **When we give feedback:** We want to hold the assumption that the person receiving feedback did their best and probably has reasons we are not aware of to act as they did.
  - **When we receive feedback:** We want to hold the assumptions that the person giving feedback is doing their best to express something that is important and dear to their heart, with an intention to care for it. Any intensity and charge they have is about how painful and important this is to them. They are not meaning to attack us.

- **Observations:**
  - **When we give feedback:** We want to give feedback rooted in observations of what the person did, with as objective language as possible, rather than what they are.
  - **When we receive feedback:** if we are not clear what are the mentioned instances, we want to check our guesses or request examples in order to be on the same page.

- **Impacts:**
  - **When we give feedback:** We want to give feedback that details impacts and consequences of actions, framed as our subjectivity.
  - **When we receive feedback:** We want to try and be curious to the impacts our actions had on the other.

- **Purpose and needs:**
  - **When we give feedback:** We want to connect our feedback to its purpose (e.g caring for our ability to achieve our circle's purpose, or caring for our relationship).
  - **When we receive feedback:** If we are not clear, or interpreting the feedback as an attack, we want to try and understand the life-enriching motivation to share feedback (e.g. *is the reason you are sharing this with me, is that you want us to find a way to work together that works for us without resentment?*).

- **Requests:**
  - **When we give feedback:** We want to give feedback constructively - with a doable request or suggestion for improvement.
  - **When we receive feedback:** We want to check that we understood what can be practically done that would attend to the needs that the person giving feedback is calling attention to.

3.5. Role development process

The intention is to support the role holder to develop within their role and as a group member, by receiving feedback and support. This process is led by the facilitator and the role holder. It is advised to do at the middle of a term for roles with a lot of influence, and generally every half a year for rebels with a lot of access to power.

1. **Invite:** Who needs to be there? Who is directly impacted by the role holder's actions and might have information that is important for growth and learning?

2. **Check in with the role holder:** how they are feeling, if they are completely willing to go into the process and what they want known, what support they need, or what they want to request in order to be open for the process.

3. **Present any role background and feedback criteria to participants:** the role description/s can be presented to the group, as well as the corresponding accountabilities. These can function as feedback criteria that participants are requested to give feedback on.

4. **Round of appreciations and gratitudes:** what are things the person did that enriched the life of others, met needs and advanced the group to its purpose? The role holder starts the round by sharing their perspective, and ends the round with a summary of what they've heard.

5. **Round of improvements and development ideas:** What does the person need to know that will support them to grow and better align their actions with their intentions and our shared values? The feedback guidelines can be used, and participants can be encouraged in advance to use them as a template. The role holder starts the round by sharing where

they see they need to improve, and what they can do about it, and ends the round with a summary of what they've heard.

The role holder may choose to define things that are part of their "back pack" - the things they carry, the things they do that are unlikely to change easily - sometimes people can write a "user manual" about this. For example "I have ADHD and tend to talk too much as I think out loud. When this is impacting the team please facilitate me by indicating it's time for me to round up or kindly asking me to share less by direct message".

6. **Synthesise & consent to a development & Support plan**, if needed:
   This part can be done within the feedback space, or separately in the most appropriate circle. The idea is for a group to take collective responsibility for the person's development. This feedback space can be very touching, inspirational and full of growth & learning opportunities! Here are some examples:
   a. Changes to the mandate: purpose and accountabilities? e.g. Consult with circle X before these types of decisions.
   b. Personal development? e.g. Finding a facilitation or anti-oppression coach or training for the person, and taking work off of them, so they can have the time to attend.
   c. Any group agreements? like a group recognition of the person's "back pack" and / or "a user manual" of how to deal with them.

3.6. Feedback to circles

Feedback needs to flow not only in circles but between them. In order to give feedback to a circle. try to either:

- Check for any preferable way to give feedback with a member of the relevant circle. If you don't have a contact person, search for a mattermost reception channel or an email address at XR's website.
- Send feedback through your coordinator to bring up in the supercircle's feedback meeting.

At the supercircle level, circle's might do a purpose & accountabilities review, with input from peers. If needed, a specific circle can get feedback from peer circles using the "role development process".

As a circle, take responsibility for inviting feedback from those impacted by your work.You can use the circle's accountabilities as feedback criteria, to focus people on what you'd like feedback on. Other possibilities exist besides collecting feedback at the supercircle level::

- Having a role to gather feedback for the circle.
- Having a couple of weeks of circle members reaching out and collecting feedback.
- Holding sessions and inviting different circles and rebels to feedback. If there are any movement gatherings with an open space component, that might be a good place to hold a session.
- Sending out forms.

3.7. Reviewing purpose & accountabilities

It is important to review purpose and accountabilities periodically, especially for a circle, as a general health check and stop point for navigation. One way is to make time for review as a group once every few months. Another possibility is for coordinators of circles to review their purpose and accountabilities with their peers in the supercircle, in a periodic feedback & learning meeting.

Review your purpose, by asking these questions:

- Does the purpose follow the helpful guidelines of defining a purpose?
- Does the purpose fit within the overall purpose you are a part of?
- Is the tension that is outlined in the purpose still relevant?
  - Is the description of the situation (still) correct?
  - Do we still believe the same things are needed in this situation?
  - Is the tension still within our domain? Are there any other teams more suited to deal with this?
- If the answer to any of them is 'no', consider updating the purpose, and if it makes sense - dissolving and serving other purposes. In an ecosystem some things need to be composted and that is a healthy and caring part of the system.

Review your accountabilities, by asking these questions:

- Are you fulfilling your accountabilities?
- Are they effective in narrowing the gap or tension outlined in the purpose statement? What would change if your group or work had disappeared?
- Do all of them still make sense?
- If the answer to any of them is 'no', consider switching accountabilities or strategies.

3.8. Action & project debriefs

[links and good practices to be added]

3.9. Inviting feedback at check-out round

A check-out round is an important opportunity for a short feedback loop about our meetings. Maybe we notice that we need to prepare more for the meetings? Maybe have shorter ones or add movement breaks? Maybe we notice we tend to get caught by tangential discussions, or maybe we are too tight on the agenda? Any feedback can greatly improve the meetings over time. This feedback is hard to give and easy to skip if it's not invited explicitly and repeatedly by the facilitator. Make a habit of closing a meeting with one celebration or appreciation and one thing to improve for better meetings.

4. Conflict practices

Conflicting opinions and desires are a normal and inevitable part of collaborating with others. The part that is our choice - is how we respond to conflict. That will determine if it leads to mutual understanding, growth, trust building, and updated agreements, or if it eventually blows up.

Our automatic tendency is to make the conflict go away, by ignoring it, avoiding it, or quickly trying to collapse the tension without a collaborative resolution: by fighting or giving-in. All of those erode trust and eventually worsen the situation. This is why we need systemic support to initiate dialogue:

4.1. Mutual understanding process

Anyone in XR UK can invite another person they are working with to a mutual understanding process. The goal is to reach sufficient mutual understanding, from which agreements on next steps can be made collaboratively. The process also fits situations in which you have a lot of trust for another, and want to sort out a disagreement - it's not only about people in a fight!

a. **Get / offer support:** First it is advisable to get supportive listening and if possible, go through a process of self-responsibility and transforming enemy images. If you witness someone in conflict and tension with another, go to them and offer supportive listening.

b. **Invite the person to a mutual understanding conversation:** Explain briefly the area where you see disagreements or possible misunderstandings, and the need you see to reach mutual understanding. If you are witnessing the conflict, suggest to those involved that they initiate a mutual understanding conversation or offer to invite all sides yourself. Unless serious harm has been caused, gently remind them how we tend to pay ten times over, even years to come, over avoided conflicts that escalate. Use a mutual understanding conversation.

c. **Ask for support in the conversation:** If the previous conversation did not work well, or it was clear from the start that meeting alone will not be enough, get more support !
    a. Ask someone you all sufficiently trust to be present in silence and facilitate only when they see it needed. They are not there to judge who is right - it's about caring for all participants and helping them understand each other like they would like to be understood. As a multipartial supporter, prepare by journaling about: *"What ideas do I have, about me, others or the process, that might prevent me from seeing everyone's humanity?".* Raise them to your consciousness and remind yourself of anything that might support you in being multipartial.
    b. If one person isn't enough, get two ! If relevant, you can ask them to be aware and help attend to power differences.
    c. If all fails, or you need much more support, ask for a transformative conflict facilitator by writing to conflict@rebellion.earth.

4.2. Mutual understanding conversation

When you are trying to reach mutual understanding with another person, here are some possibilities of how to make the conversation effective:

- **Take turns speaking & listening.**
  In order not to make it only symbolic, You can use this set-up explanation: Two people cannot express themselves and be understood at the same time. It would be like trying to pour water from two full cups to the other, simultaneously. Everything gets spilled. When person A speaks, the *only role* person B has in that time is to try as much as they can to understand person A and how they experience the world, even if they disagree. Then person B has a chance to express themselves, with person A requested to try the best they can to understand them.

- **Use "understanding loops".**
  When we are in conflict, it becomes less likely that the message we understand from the other is the message they intended to convey (they might choose words they don't mean,

and we might interpret them in a very different way). We avoid that by making sure that everyone is understood *as they would like to be understood*:

- Person A speaks
- Person B checks if they've understood: "What I understand is … Is that it?" There's no need to reflect everything. Focus on the essence and what they most wanted to be heard about.
- Person A confirms if they feel heard, or corrects if something is missing or not as they intended. If there's a correction, person B reflects it as well and checks if they've understood correctly.
- When we get to a 'yes', we switch.
- Only after sufficient mutual understanding and connection, ask: "What might be a way forward that would work for all / consider what is important to all?"

- **Consider using writing:**
  At the beginning of the conversation, or prior to it, each side of the conversation can get clear on what matters to them through some key questions, like:
  - "What is the thing, that if the other person knew and understood, would relax you?"
  - "What is important to you in this? What are your needs? What are you trying to serve?"
  - "What do you fear? what is at risk for you?"

- **Use an agreed way to pause:**
  Establish a sign (e.g. raising your palm) that would signal taking a pause to breathe and ground in the body. It can be used when pain or a trigger is too sharp to continue in togetherness. Take the time to relax and realign to the purpose of the conversation to mutually understand each other.

- Here is a **guide from the transformative conflict team** with more recommendations and a detailed conversation script.

4.3. Attending to conflict through a change in agreements

Sometimes a conflict emanates from a lack of clarity and consent about governance agreements, for example - who does what.

- Try to see if there's agreements and decision-mapping that can clarify this source of conflict.
- Try minimise the conflict by a change to policy or roles. for example: reelection, or policy for a role that limits and guides its authority.
- Try managing the conflict:
  - It might be that some people need to work more apart, or work towards different directions in parallel. If we agree to that in coordination and collaboration, it can make a world of difference. Consider what can be clarified between those involved so working more apart can happen in collaboration, without harm to the circle and overall purpose? without creating more issues that "working around each other", "ignoring each other", or "pulling to opposite directions" tend to cause?
  - It is likely that some people are stressed and overwhelmed with other things in their life, emerging as conflict. Try and see where support and capacity can be increased.

4.4. Adapting your conflict agreement

It might be useful to adapt your conflict system/agreements - of how you want to respond to conflict when it arises - to your own context and culture. The key to doing that, is to explore with the group 2 questions:

a. Think of a time when we responded to conflict in our group and it went well. What was that response?
b. Think of a time when we responded to conflict in our group and it didn't go well. What was that response?

There's local wisdom to gain here. For example, we might hear something like:
"It seems our rebels don't have a lot of time to attend long meetings about conflict, so tensions get ignored and escalate. At times when one of the parties agreed to be vulnerable, make the first move, and take responsibility over their part, that opened something."

When we take the answers seriously, and don't expect them to teach us what we already know about how to resolve conflict, we can adapt our conflict agreements to the local culture and resources. We might, for example, put more emphasis on supporting the parties to take self-responsibility. Notice that the more the process is resource-heavy and time consuming, the more detached rebels feel from it.

4.5. Self-responsibility process

Sometimes a conflict, especially in a low resource environment such as our movement, will keep going until someone will be willing to make the first step towards the other, be vulnerable and own up to what is their part in it. We don't always have the luxury to wait for the other to hear us first. We've experienced in XR UK how this act can resolve conflicts and hostility. Here's a possible way to move towards that direction:

a. Release any expectations that this process will make anything better. See if you can do it for yourself, your integrity, the care you have for the movement, and as a response to the call of our times to be "bigger" than we are.
b. If needed, get someone to support you through this process. It can be hard to do without empathy and support for yourself.
c. Write down anything you've done that contributed to the escalation or sense of separation in this conflict.
d. Write down anything you've done that had or might have had a challenging impact on the other.
e. Write down any honest sadness, mourning or regret you can find in yourself over any of your actions, the impacts they had, and the overall impact on the relationship and the work.
f. Write down any expressions of how you wished it could have been, and what kind of relationship you hope or could have hoped for instead.
g. Ask the other person if you can share what you've written with them. If they are willing, send it to them or share it when you meet.
h. Acknowledge that you might be missing a lot of things, that might be even more substantial to them. If you have the openness, ask them what else you are missing. You can also ask how was that for them to hear.

4.6. Transforming enemy images

The goal of this process is to retrieve full power and choice to you, of how to best respond to the conflict, by removing reactivity coming from seeing the other as some version of an enemy.

a. **Write your judgments** of the person with all of their bluntness.
   Remember, this is just some of your thoughts and it isn't all of what you think or who you are.

b. **Explore your needs.**
   What are you needing that you are expressing as these judgements? Your goal in this stage is to get to a place where what you come up with in terms of what you need, expresses everything that is expressed in the judgements. Ask yourself: Can I throw my judgements to the bin and *no information would be lost*? If not, keep looking until you reach some relief from self-connection to what matters to you.

c. **Explore what needs the other is trying to serve by their actions.**
   Your goal is to reach something that you can connect to emotionally, so in some way it opens your heart. If it's hard for you to do, it might mean the judgments are still in the way. Use any resistance in you as a compass. For example, you might think the other person might be needing more ease, but then immediately you think "- but they always must have things their way." This is a clue of your needs that you have yet to extract or that you have yet to explore in their fullest. Go back to the previous stage to explore them. When you are ready, come back to exploring the other's needs. Continue until you experience some relief from empathic connection.

d. **Go back and read the judgements.**
   Are they still alive as before? Go over this process as much as needed and you have capacity for.

5. Circle membership practices

5.1. Adding a new member

Having a team consent consciously to the joining of a person helps the team take ownership of who is a part of the team and how the team functions. Defined membership by consent is part of the constitution. Consider if the extra presence, especially in supercircles, is worth the potential loss of effectiveness. Aim for 5-7 peopl in a working circle. There is a lot of research about teams of less than 10 people being more successful, having better work-life quality and better cohesion and communication.

Remember that a team is built through strong relationships. Commitment and effectiveness in a group are built through strong relationships. When adding a new member, get to know them. Make sure they have a 1 on 1 connection, be it a coordinator, an integrator or a buddy. In those 1-on-1 conversations:

- get to know what motivates them, what they want to be doing, what their gifts are, and what they need throughout their integration process.
- Ask about any accessibility needs they might have.

- Ask about any limitation in capacity they have that would support them to be known - e.g Someone might want to share that they tend to talk a lot, but not notice it at the time, and that it will not change any time soon. They might say it would support them if people signaled to them to wrap up.
- Give them bite-sized tasks at the beginning and grow their engagement at the pace that fits them.
- Help them connect to any core trainings, systems and support that is available for them.
- Here are some more detailed onboarding insights from rebel pathways.

Before accepting a new member, it might be useful for the integrity of the team to understand the following:

- Discern if there's a match. Check if there's alignment between the person, their passion, skills and limitations with the purpose of the circle and the work needed inside of it.
- Ask about history. Check with the person joining about their previous involvement in circles, why they left them, what were the conflicts they faced and if they've ever been asked to leave a circle and why.

5.2. Separating from a member

If you or someone else is experiencing serious harm from someone, like physical, sexual, harassment or bullying - turn to the "dealing with harmful behaviour policy". This is also the way to ask someone to leave the movement.

Otherwise, asking someone to leave a circle is best framed not as a personal thing, but as **acknowledging the limits of capacity in the group** to find the ways to work with the person, and still fulfil the shared purpose and preserve wellbeing.

Before going for separation, try these practices:

- **Giving feedback:** If there are issues with a member, give them feedback. If feedback is not enough, consider:
- **Changing group agreements.**
- **Initiating a mutual understanding process.**

If conflict engagement isn't sufficient, and remaining together in the same circle is harmful to rebels or the work, consider:

- **Requesting the person to leave:** Acknowledge the capacity limits in you, in the group and in the movement. Maybe with more capacity you would have found ways to collaborate while preserving well being and effectiveness, but unfortunately you don't have it. Remember that you are asking for the person's help in understanding and cooperating with you, even when it might be very painful for them. Acknowledge that.
- **Separation process:** as described below.

Preparation for a separation process:

- Ask for support before initiating the process. Take advice from people you are willing to engage with about this proposal to ask someone to leave.
- Make sure the process is initiated and facilitated with care for the person who is asked to leave. Refrain from any "wrongness" framing.
- Update the circle about what was tried: feedback, decision making, conflict processes.

- Explain the impact you see it has on you, on others and on the circle. Explain that you see the cost as too high, and this is why you want to assess the cost as a group.

A facilitated process:
- The constitution suggests moving the decision to a vote, to keep it as simple as possible. Here is an alternative possibility: a facilitator goes over possibilities:
  - The circle and the person will separate
  - Find ways for the affected people to work apart, but in the same circle.
  - Try another conflict process with better support (if the person is willing).
  - (Other possibilities can be added by the group).
- Circle members are asked to gauge the cost to the group, from each of the possibilities, between 1-10. Consider, along with care for people, your purpose as a circle.
- Sum up the costs for each of the possibilities.
- Go with the option with the least amount of cost.
- Ask, when going with this option, what can minimise the cost that you see?
  - Get support to anyone needing and decide on additional measures that minimise the cost.
  - (If there is more room to explore, this section can happen before the summation of the results. We understand that support that is needed in each possibility, and then we write down the numbers again, then we go with the least costly).
- Announce the decision. Check if anyone needs emotional support stepping out of the meeting and see if it's available from within the group. If not, give them a link to the Trained Emotional Support Network (TESN).

5.3. Saying goodbye to a member

When a circle member is leaving, pay attention to the following things that might be overlooked:

- **Celebrate their presence**: feed back to them any way in which they contributed to others and the work.
- **Learn from their feedback:** If they are leaving because of frustrations with the movement / group, don't miss the opportunity to collect the feedback from them about what was too difficult for them and what they needed that was not met. It is a loss if someone leaves because of hardship without the system learning from it.
- **Support smooth handover:** of roles, knowledge and responsibilities the person carried. e.g. You might find months later you need editing access to documents only that person had access to, and the person is no longer reachable.

6. Wellbeing & support practices

Burnout happens when people deal with more than they can carry. (See "Circle's capacity survey" for the main reasons rebels leave their roles).

There's two main things to nurture in a team to avoid burnout:

- **Support,** which increases a person's capacity to carry.
  Intention: we strive to build a culture of support, in which we ask for the support we need and practice receiving, and in which we notice when others are struggling and practice checking with them what they need.

- **Choice,** which increases the likelihood of a person to work in a sustainable manner and experience themselves as being on top of things, rather than being helplessly crushed under the weight of everything.
  Intention: we strive to build a culture of choice, in which we do things out of true willingness, so we do not crash or accumulate grudges. We practice being aware of our own and other's tendency to do things out of guilt, shame, fear or obligation - all of which come with a decreased sense of choice. We practice being honest and compassionate about our capacity, taking on what we can reliably do, saying 'no', and supportively doubting a 'yes' when we see someone is overworked.

These aspirations need to be anchored systemically and in practices, so they are not based only on good intentions and personal initiative. For any supportive practice, check if it is increasing the sense of support and choice you have of what to take on and what information to take in. It might be that some practices generally sound regenerative-culture-esque, but in practice, don't accomplish it for you, for your team or for your context.

Here are basic things that can be implemented within any team for more support and choice:

6.1. Supportive listening channel

Open a communication channel for your team, dedicated only for requests of supportive listening, be it for 10min or 30 min. e.g: "I had the most stressful meeting now. Is someone available to listen to me for 10minutes?". Often after a first person dares to request support, a gate opens, and people feel more supported just knowing this is available for them.

When noticing a circle member in distress, and you are not available to offer support, you can offer to request supportive listening for them in the common channel, e.g: "X has just had the most stressful meeting. Can someone be available for them today for supportive listening?".

Another possibility is to agree to use that space for short sharings in writings about anything difficult that would support you to share. Sometimes it is much more accessible for people than asking for supportive listening.

Agree and make sure together that you are inviting support that comes only from availability, capacity and willingness, and that it cannot be guaranteed. So, if you want a response or supportive listening, actively ask for it. and even if you do, there might be no availability to give it. Only if this is established people feel completely comfortable to make requests and receive them.

6.2. Peer guidance and coaching

When we are overwhelmed, our creativity and flexibility diminishes in the face of challenges. This is where we can get precious support from our peers in the form of coaching. The goal of coaching is to help people find their own solutions to meet challenges from a place of greater awareness, and the role of a coach is to listen and ask questions to get people to uncover the answers in themselves.

- Coaching can happen in a 1 on 1 setting. Check out the chapter "Coaching: Enabling others" from a famous organsing handbook (p.21-24).

- Coaching can happen mutually in a group setting. Check out this 2 page outline from the presencing institute. The most powerful part of this approach is the mirroring. A simple mirroring for a peer can be immensely supportive in imagining different ways to go about things, e.g "What came up for me was an image of someone trying to put out fires while being on fire".

A peer coaching agreement is a way to make this sort of support more systematically available and accessible to initiate. For example, a group can decide that:

- A core part of the internal coordinator's role is to maintain supportive 1 on 1s with group members once every few weeks (it's sustainable when the circle is small)
- Anyone can ask for a 1 on 1 coaching session with a coordinator or with a peer of their choice.
- Another possibility is to insert group coaching sessions periodically, especially in super-circles and spaces where coordinators can bring the challenges from their own groups.

6.3. Sustainability and capacity check-in

Explicitly invite people in a feedback meeting to ponder the question: "Am I working sustainably right now? Can I keep going like this for the long run?"
This can also be indicated with a simple 1-5 fingers. Indications of unsustainability can raise these responses:
- A lot of resonance, making everyone feel less alone
- Understanding there is a systemic issue here that can be addressed together
- Supporting each other by taking tasks from each other, sharing tasks, rotating tasks, supporting prioritisation, supporting choice to let go of tasks by listening and reassuring that this is what would benefit the work.

It might be useful to have in a feedback meeting template a list of signs of overworking, and a list of remedies for it.

6.4. Reminders of available support

When people in your circle need support, remind them and the group of available resources for support, such as contacting the TESN (trained emotional support network), or going to an empathy circle. A core part of the emotional journey in XR UK is attending to our grief for the state of the world, so we can respond to it effectively from choice and not reactivity. These reminders can be inserted with links in minutes, or other places where they are seen frequently.

6.5. Celebrations and appreciations

People can't go long without seeing and hearing how their efforts enrich life. Celebrating what works and expressing gratitude for others' actions is immensely fueling.
- A team can do a round of gratitude at each feedback meeting.
- When checking-out, encourage people to express one gratitude they have. The type of gratitude we are mostly looking for is the type that will let people sigh in satisfaction - ah, my actions made this possible !

- A team can also greatly benefit by opening each operational meeting (after check-ins) with sharings of celebrations - a few minutes in which we share any new progress and achievements in our work. It is a way to update the group on what is going well and moving forward, without being dry or tedious. Celebrations give us a sense of accomplishment and forward momentum, nourish our need to know that we are contributing to the world, and encourage us to keep succeeding so we can keep celebrating.

6.6. Nervous system regulation practices

Experiment with taking short body breaks during meetings, and opening with a heart coherence practice for best thinking to be available. We can use co- liberation mind- brain and body- brain practices that might increase group coherence [Links to be added] . The idea is to calm our nervous system and be connected more easily to inner resources and to each other. We are looking for the quality of connection and presence in which our hearts and minds can relax together. When we are stressed, triggered and feeling under some sort of threat we are much more likely to be reactive, and less likely to be in choice. Give these an honest try, experiment and check what truly works for the group.

6.7. Making agreements about rest and digital boundaries

Here are a few useful types of agreements to consider making in your group:
- Deciding on “working hours” outside of which you don’t message each other or use the shared channels. For example, evenings and weekends.
- Scheduling shared breaks, or “a week without meetings”. Aim for times when there is low activity and let other circles know. Anyone can suggest a time for a shared circle break.
- An agreement that anyone in the circle can take an individual break for a period of time (e.g. a week) when needed, after going through a short checklist that you decide on together. (e.g. “Notify the circle at least a week in advance. Check if anything critical is needed from you before you take the break.”). A possible part of the agreement is that the circle will not message them in that time, unless urgent, not even on mattermost, so messages will not wait for them.
- Supporting circle members to use technological tools that help to put boundaries on incoming messages and calls. People in a circle can be given simple instructions on how to mute most channels on mattermost, set in their computer automatic closing times of the mattermost app, and separate work emails from personal emails in order to easily avoid them during off times.

7. Resource flow practices

7.1. Money distribution

When money needs to be distributed between circles or people, consider this process (adapt it to your own context):

a. Agree on dialoguers, tuners and decision makers
You need to understand the makeup of 3 groups:

- Dialoguers: the people who need to be in dialogue about the decision. e.g. When distributing funds between circles of a supercircle, the coordinators / other reps of those circles might be the most appropriate. e.g. When receiving grant requests from the entire movement, the UK-wide budgeting group might be the appropriate circle. If you think dialogue about money can cause more harm than good, set the process only around tuners and decision makers
- Tuners: the 2-3 rebels who are going to synthesise the final proposal of money allocation.
- Decision makers: the ones who make the final decision. they can be the tuners themselves, or the entire group of dialoguers.

b. Articulate criteria

What are the criteria for applying and for deciding on distribution?
Here are some examples:

- The use of money will directly enable us to advance towards our circle's purpose, in a tangible way.
- Requests will be up to 1000 pounds.

In this document by the strategic finance circle, you can see some example criteria on page 2.

c. Publish process and boundaries

Explain the process to all the stakeholders and explain any givens or boundaries of money available, max money per circle / person if it makes sense, time for the process, and time for the decision making phase. A request template might be useful. Here is an example for the distribution of grants from the BIPOC fund, and here is a blank template. Within a circle a request template can be much simpler.

d. Collect requests

Give the time for circles / people to self assess according to the criteria and the boundaries and submit a request. A request template might be useful.

e. Iterative dialogue

If the total amount requested is at or below the amount available, there might not be a need for dialogue. If it's more than available, and you feel confident enough to hold a dialogue within the group of dialoguers, go into iterative dialogue between the "dialoguers". If not, go straight to the tuning stage. Money is a very sensitive subject, this is why our dialogue doesn't take the form of open discussion. It is time limited, facilitated & focused, turn-based, and without the need to converge. You can't stress that enough - they are not deciding, only producing wisdom and information that will then feed the tuners in making a proposal. Here are 3 examples:

1. **Selection Process**
   Just like in the selection process, each rebel in the dialogue writes on a piece of paper / in a spreadsheet their proposed distribution. In a round, each person explains their reasoning according to the criteria. After everyone has been heard, there is a change round - where rebels can change their selection.

2. **Money Pile**
   In turns, each rebel can "move" money from the shared pot, to any of the requests on the table. We keep going in rounds until all the money is distributed, then rebels can choose in their turn to move money from one request to another. Any move is accompanied by the reason for the move. Nothing is final! We keep the rounds until no one wants to make any more moves, or that the time for the process has ended.

3. **Co-budgeting**
   Each rebel has a nominal amount from the shared pot (the total amount divided by the number of dialoguers). Rebels can now choose how to distribute their amount between the requests, and change it based on others' actions. Check out this co-budgeting process explanation.

f. Synthesise

Pass the information to the small group of tuners. They are tasked with synthesising a final proposal. If the dialogue already produced an outcome people can go with, no change is needed.

g. Consent by decision makers

If the tuners are also the decision makers, you have a decision! If not, bring the proposal to the decision makers (e.g. The entire group) and invite objections (see: integrating objections). You can set a time limit to get consent, let the tuners decide or use a "willingness based vote" to choose between options.

7.2. Common-resource policy

When a circle is responsible for a common resource, like money or a shared communication channel, it's members or other circles might need to access it. To avoid confusion and conflict, and to create more clarity and trust, it is good practice to build a common-resource policy. The policy makes it clear how others can request, access and engage with the common resource. Below are two examples outlined in parallel, the first is about a newsletter, and one is about a money pot in a project.

- **Purpose:**
  Start by stating the purpose of the common resource.
  - e.g. This newsletter is intended to keep a variety of rebels updated, connected and more engaged.
  - e.g. The money we have is intended to support this project to fulfil its purpose, in alignment with our principles & values.

- **Process:**
  In this section, explain the process the rebel needs to go through in order to engage with the resource. Be clear about who gives input, who decides, and by which criteria & constraints. Add the reasons and the needs you are attempting to serve by having this process the way it is.
  - e.g. In order to publish in the newsletter, contact [...]. It needs to fulfill all of these criteria [....]. Based on that, the newsletter team decides what gets in the newsletter.
  - e.g. To produce your financial request, consult the project coordinator and 2 other circle members, and follow these criteria [...]. If requesting money is hard for you, turn to [...] for assistance. Once a month we will have a space for financial requests and make the decision by the consent of the circle.

- **Feedback requests:**
  If the policy is for other circles, invite feedback and explain the extent of your ability to engage with feedback. If you have any requests or thresholds for feedback, add them, including the needs behind them.

- e.g. If you find yourself grateful for the newsletter and our work, let us know [here]. This is extremely demanding work and we find your encouragement nourishing.
- If you find yourself upset about an engagement with us, or about something you wanted to get on the newsletter that didn't go through, you can let us know about the impact it had on you [here]. We read them but unfortunately we don't have capacity to respond. We wish that you trust that we are doing our best to serve the movement given our capacity, and that nothing is personal.
- That being said, we welcome general feedback on this process, and will engage with it to the best of our ability, so the process can improve. In your feedback, please add any suggestions you have, that are still attending to the different reasons this process is currently the way it is.