Hey! I don't know you but I can write to this document 😀Hellos from Finland. Let's continue the fight.

Editors' Notes:

Brown = Iain happy with

Yellow = accepted by Joana (finished)

Pink = Needs attention

HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR

If someone in the team is causing harm through their involvement: the internal co-ordinator can decide to pause someone's involvement in a team. We recommend that you try Conflict First Aid and/or Tension Processing first and pause someone's involvement only as a last resort or in an emergency situation.

*Please note that the following 'website map' will not actually appear on the website. The CAPS words will appear on the left hand menu column of the site and the contents will appear at the top of each individual page. Those are already included in the actual pages if that makes sense? This is the map to get an overall sense of where everything is.

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- Transforming Enemy Images with LASER - a short exercise to do by yourself when you are experiencing tensions or difficulties with another person.
- 1 to 1 ‘Conflict Conversation’ guide - a guide to help two people have a conversation about a conflict or tension between them
- Tension Shifting - an effective technique to air tensions periodically in your group
- Group Agreements - a guide to creating agreements around how to work together - promoting harmony and preventing conflict

- Workshops - information about the workshops and training offered by the TCT

CONFLICT FIRST AID *this section needs putting in order in the actual body (headings seem relatively okay?) Please change as you like

- Shpiel/intro (importance of support & self-care)
- Breathe
- Find a supportive listener
- Self Care Practices (ADD)
- Link to tools Add
- Link to 'get more support'
- (Further resources) *?

GET SUPPORT

COMMUNICATE WITH US

Line spacing 1.25, space AfteR paragraph. Arial 12. Black.

Dark Orange = added to Tools website.

HOME

Welcome to the website of the XRUK Transformative Conflict Team (TCT).

Here you will find all the information about what we do and how to have fewer and better conflicts in XR and beyond!

Please use the dropdown menu button in the top left to navigate and explore the website, or use the links below.

It was created by XR volunteers working in a particular context. Some parts may not be relevant to you, you may disagree with some parts and you might wish to expand or adapt others to your context. Please take what is useful to you and leave the rest.

We hope you find it helpful!

If you would like to give feedback, please email conflict@rebellion.earth with your comments or to arrange a conversation. We welcome your feedback.

This website was last updated in April 2022.

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What is Conflict?

Conflict is part of life - whether it's low level household tensions with partners or family, disagreements about strategic direction within an organisation, or ideological or political conflicts that play out across societies, countries or generations. Conflicts can range in intensity and scale from something as simple as one person feeling irritated by the words or actions of another, all the way up to a violent clash, or even war. We can also have internal conflicts between different parts of ourselves - for example, the part that wants to eat lots of cookies and the part that wants to eat less sugar, or the part that wants to reduce our carbon emissions and the part that wants to jump on a plane to Italy!

You can also think of conflict in terms of tension or friction. Where there is tension, things feel stretched or tense, and when there is enough tension, the metaphorical rubber band might snap in two. This is like gradually worsening relations within a group that then explode into irreconcilable argument and acrimony. Friction leads to heat and - when there is enough - fire. We may not think of low level tensions as being 'conflict', and actually, sometimes it might make more sense to speak in terms of tension or friction, but in this website, we use the word conflict to refer to the full spectrum of tensions, frictions, disagreements, and, at points, the fields of accountability and justice.

Many of us have grown up in a way where conflict is associated with pain, shaming, wrongdoing. It isn't uncommon or strange to experience conflict as unpleasant and difficult to engage with. but it can also become an opportunity for learning, growth, transformation and deeper connection to the other as well as a grown understanding of ourselves. Viewing conflict as a source of information or a form of feedback can help us to see through the difficulty towards those nuggets of gold that might be waiting to be found.

If we are feeling stressed, frustrated, confused or in pain around our work in XR, that is a sign that we may be experiencing conflict. Most people in XR will at some point have experienced difficulties collaborating with others, or experienced a lack of trust and

connection. We might be longing to be listened to, or for something in the way we work to change without knowing how to go about to make those changes happen.

Conflict may be signalling that :

- some needs are unmet
- the power and/or trust to care for the needs of everyone involved is not currently within reach
- change is emerging
- our relationships, agreements, understanding of what we are trying to do together, ways of sharing power, and social systems [1], may need to evolve.

Conflicts are often really painful, distressing, frustrating and destructive and our experiences of it are mostly negative and traumatic. Engaging with conflicts also requires quite a bit of emotional energy, so it's understandable that often people may seek to avoid engaging with conflicts.

But conflict often contains a lot of energy, meaning, and potential. By finding the right way to navigate conflict, we can unlock this transformative potential and ease the tensions, while at the same time strengthening and deepening collaboration and understanding. Viewing conflict as an opportunity to evolve and build our collective power leads naturally to a transformative approach to conflict [2].

"The absence of dialogue is deadly"

- Dominic Barter

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[1] For example, if someone took some bread from a baker's shop without asking or paying, the criminal justice system would make a decision about whether a rule was broken and then punish an individual for "wrongdoing". In a context where people listened to feedback on social systems within an event like this, people might start to

collectively engage with the system for distributing resources (e.g. capitalism), and how well it is meeting needs

[2] We have experienced all of this directly within the conflict team: we have found ourselves in a painful conflict, and found support to guide us in hearing each other and letting the conflict change and evolve how we work together. This brought us to a much better place, with better relationships, communication and ways of working.

Why does Conflict matter?

Conflict matters because it's an inevitable part of community, work or activist life that - when not handled well - can tear groups and movements apart and create stress or burnout for those involved.

The flipside is that when handled successfully, it can become a site of transformation, reflection and learning. So it's essential that movements like XR are able to process tensions and conflict appropriately if we are to create a healthy, regenerative and successful movement.

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What is a Transformative Approach to Conflict?

The dominant and default approaches to conflict in society are often **punitive**, though there is a growing movement towards restorative justice as an alternative to this.[4]. Punitive approaches tend to see conflict as occurring between a perpetrator and a victim and seek to identify who has done wrong and punish that person. This system can lead to oppression and may not address the root causes of the conflict. Punitive justice systems can destroy, rather than transform relationships.

Restorative approaches attempt to move beyond the oppression of our current justice systems by responding to conflict through healing or restoring the relationships and connections between the people involved. These approaches tend to focus on hearing the human impact that our choices and actions have had on others.

Following the spirit of restorative approaches, we choose to mainly use the term **transformative**, which emphasises that a process is about creating positive change in relationships, conditions and systems. Rather than resolution meaning just going back to a situation where things were really not ok for some, it's about listening to what's not ok and co-creating a way forward that genuinely works for all.

In XR, a transformative approach to conflict involves actively engaging with tensions before they bubble over into intractable conflicts, as well as extending our care to all involved in difficult situations. At times, we may have the desire to punish people or remove people from XR and sometimes this might need to happen, but generally the hope is that conflicts can be transformed through dialogue and skillful engagement, without opting to exclude or punish by default.

"I believe in transformative justice - that rather than punishing people for surface-level behavior, or restoring conditions to where they were before the harm happened, we need to find the roots of the harm, together, and make the harm impossible in the future. I believe that the roots of most harm are systemic, and we must be willing to disrupt vicious systems that have been normalized. I believe that we are at the beginning of learning how to really practice transformative justice in this iteration of species and society. There is ancient practice, and

there will need to be future practices we can't yet foresee. But I believe that with time it must become an incredible pleasure to be able to be honest, expect to be whole, and to know that we are in a community that will hold us accountable and change with us."

- adrienne maree brown

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[4] Another term that is often used is retributive, which also refers to punishment and causing more pain as a response to pain

What is a Conflict System?

By the word 'system' we mean an agreed way of dealing with conflict in a group, team, community, family or organization, it is a set way of doing things. [5].

Homes all over the world have a room set up for cooking and another for sleeping. We have these in place because we know that we get hungry and tired every day. In the same way, a conflict "room" is vital to any community. That means that there is an agreed way to deal with conflicts, that we all know is there, ready and waiting for when we naturally and inevitably clash or disagree.

We can think of this system as our compost toilet that we've set up as a community. If there's no toilet set up, the house will get unpleasant and messy.

We don't just want to flush away uncomfortable conflicts, we want to transform them into something useful for everyone. Our conflicts can tell us a lot about

ourselves, the health of our teams or movement, and what we might need to change. A transformed conflict can enrich XR's soil and grow our collaboration and trust.

We believe that it's important to intentionally get clear on what our system for engaging with conflict is [6]. We want to create the systemic conditions in which it makes sense to engage in conflict in the ways we see as most helpful and likely to meet everyone's needs. For example, in a system for handling conflict that is based on punishment, "anything you say may be used against you" and people may be discouraged from being completely honest. So we would like to create conditions for people to speak and listen to each other openly, honestly and with care.

Knowing that conflict will keep coming up in a similar way, how can we set up what we need for engaging with it in a way that meets our needs? And can we try to do it beforehand, knowing that it's coming, rather than setting up our bed when we're really tired, or our kitchen late at night when we're hungry, or our way of handling conflict when we're already in pain and are struggling to communicate? If we don't create the system we want, we are likely to end up reproducing the patterns of the dominant systems in our society [6].

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[5] This can be a clear, explicit, intentional agreement, or it might be something a group agrees to without realising it.

[6] We believe that if we don't choose the system we want, we will mostly default into the patterns of the systems that are dominant in our society

Transformative Conflict in XR

In our experience, the things that are not working well in XR (both structurally and culturally) lead to conflict.

This means that having a well functioning conflict system has transformative potential for our movement. Each conflict gives vital information about what is and isn't working well with XR's structure and culture. We can use this feedback to make XR more effective at embodying its principles and values and reaching its aims.

To achieve this there must be a clear process for tracking cultural and structural problems in the XR and then moving them towards clear proposals for change. We are working towards finding the best ways to support personal, interpersonal and systemic transformation to happen within the movement. In each process we facilitate we will listen for feedback on XR UK's social systems (our agreements for things like: how we make decisions, how we share resources, organise support, share information, handle conflict, listen to feedback) and seek to support people to create agreements that change and upgrade these systems.

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Collective, structural and systemic change coming from conflict

We try to support personal to systemic levels of change to come out of conflicts, carried into action through specific agreements. Sometimes collective or systemic changes will need to involve more people than those who participate in the facilitated process. We would then try to support those who are directly

participating to make agreements on how they will mobilise to try to bring about those wider or deeper changes.

It's not within our mandate to enforce changes, but one aim of the Transformative Conflict team is to bring people into connection in order for them to start working together to address the conditions that brought them into conflict. We will listen for feedback on how well the conflict processes are turning into positive change and transformation at systemic levels.

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Glossary of terms & concepts

Needs

Needs are things that are necessary for people to feel well and fulfilled in life. They include physical needs like food and shelter, as well as emotional or relational needs like a sense of meaning, dignity, freedom or a sense of belonging. For a list of the sort of needs we are talking about please see here. When our needs are met, we are likely to feel happy, joyful or content, while an unmet need may give rise to an unpleasant feeling like dissatisfaction, anger or loneliness.

The idea is that these needs are universal to all humans and that different people will develop different strategies to meet their needs. E.g: One person may use the strategy of watching T.V. to meet their need for relaxation while another might go for a gentle walk. Needs for connection, creativity and physical activity can be met by different activities that will be preferred by different individuals, such as being part of a rowing team, a dance group or a knitting club, but the needs themselves are universal.

People may not be consciously aware of their strategies, or even their needs. One idea in the field of non violent communication is that by becoming more aware of our needs, we are able to develop strategies that are more fulfilling and life-affirming. Viewed through the lens of needs, somebody who flies around the

world from holiday to party to holiday has a valid need for stimulation and play, but we know that flying is harmful to the environment and will have an impact on others' needs for food or safety, so the strategy is problematic, while the needs are valid.

So, while needs are universal and all needs matter, strategies can cause problems when they meet others' needs. One aim of NVC is to bring about situations where all needs are met using strategies that do not harm others.

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Non violent communication

Non-Violent Communication (NVC) is a particular style and methodology of communication that is particularly relevant to conflicts and relationships. The aim of using NVC is to create life-affirming relationships that meet human needs.

Developed by Marshall Rosenberg from the 1960s onwards, NVC holds that there are universal needs and feelings that we all have, and that by generating empathy for ourselves and others and communicating skillfully, we can create more loving, authentic and life-affirming relationships that meet the needs of everyone involved.

There is an emphasis on communicating with compassion, respect and sincerity, without inflicting harm on others by blaming, judging or accusing and Rosenberg proposes a number of sometimes quite subtle changes to habitual language structures that we can use to achieve this. This style of language is sometimes called 'giraffe talk', and can feel clumsy or unnatural at first, but with study and practice it can become second nature. You may already have encountered or used some of these language structures yourself, perhaps without realising that they could be described as NVC.

NVC does have criticisms, including around issues of power, privilege and oppression - specifically that NVC can be used to entrench privilege, manipulate people or exclude those who aren't able to express themselves using NVC. It's

difficult to say how widespread such abuses of NVC are and such activities should certainly be seen as a mis-use or abuse of NVC, rather than a 'true' application of it. That said, it sounds like there is a need to address such issues within the NVC training and practice community, and for each individual practitioner to be aware of and mitigate for such dynamics.

Please see the NVC wikipedia page for more info.

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Tension

Within the context of this website, we are talking about tensions that come up between the group during the course of working together. Related to the word 'tense' - derived from the Latin for 'stretch' - experiences of tension are feelings of dis-ease, discomfort, difficulty, confusion or overwhelm. It might not be immediately clear what a tension is about but often there is a physical experience, a felt sense or a thought telling you something isn't as it should be. We may feel tension in our bodies or experience impatience or frustration. If you are continually annoyed, upset, confused or anxious about something happening within your group, in relation to your own place within the group, or in relation to someone within the group you could say that you are feeling a tension, or that you have tension around whatever is happening.

It's a good idea not to let tensions go unaddressed for too long. Using the image of a rubber band (or someone's patience) being stretched, we can see that it cannot continue to stretch forever before it breaks! In practice, that might mean that unaddressed, simmering tensions in a group can suddenly boil over into acrimony, dispute, or even violence. You can use tension shifting to address tensions within your group.

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Deep Listening

Deep listening is listening with full attention, without interrupting or reacting. It is listening with the intent to really hear the other person - what they are saying as well as

what may be unsaid. While you are listening, you can also be aware of thoughts or feelings that arise within your mind or body, noticing them come and go without identifying or being caught in them.

'*Deep listening is the kind of listening that can help relieve the suffering of another person. You can call it compassionate listening. You listen with only one purpose: to help them to empty their heart. Even if they say things that are full of wrong perceptions, full of bitterness, you are still capable of continuing to listen with compassion. Because you know that listening like that, you give that person a chance to suffer less. If you want to help them to correct their perception, you wait for another time. For now, you don't interrupt. You don't argue. If you do, they lose their chance. You just listen with compassion and help them to suffer less. One hour like that can bring transformation and healing.' Thich Nhat Hanh*

See here for the full segment of the interview

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Links to further reading

Flow, Decision-Making, and Conflict - A fantastic, in-depth article from the brilliant Mikki Kashtan

https://www.restorativecircles.org/ - The website of Restorative Circles, the work begun by Dominic Barter

Non-Violent Communication, A Language of Life by Marshal Rosenberg & Lucy Leu, 2015 - The authoritative text on Non-Violent Communication and a wonderful book.

https://adriennemareebrown.net/ - The website of adrienne maree brown

https://thesystemsthinker.com/moving-from-blame-to-accountability/ - A great article on 'moving from blame to accountability' within and between individuals, groups and organisations.

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ABOUT THE TEAM **NOT INCLUDED ON TOOLS WEBPAGE

- Our Purpose and Accountabilities
- Our Work
- A bit of context
- How we built the conflict system together
- Ongoing Feedback on the System

Our Purpose and Accountabilities

The purpose of our circle according to the XR Self Organising System is:

Co-creating transformative justice systems and cultures within XR.

Our accountabilities according to the XR Self Organising System are:

- **Incorporate transformative justice system(s) and culture(s) within XR**
- **Collaborate on cross-movement System Building with the XR community to harness resilience and collective power**
- **Provide ongoing information, training and support to fulfill our mission, working with Working, Local, and International Groups, and Conflict Mediators/Facilitators**
- **Support rebels in processing conflicts within the movement that may require deeper experience or expertise - e.g. restorative circles or convergent facilitation**
- **Support the system(s) to become community owned, accessible and encouraging of feedback, learning and transformation**

We also want to work towards liberation, decolonisation and against structures of oppression in service of our purpose to transform at the personal, interpersonal, systemic and cultural levels.

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Our Work

Our work currently consists of two main activities:

1: Supporting people involved in live conflicts within XR.

2: Providing ongoing training and resources and direct support to help people successfully handle conflict within their groups.

Please see relevant links and sections of this website for more information.

We also collaborate with other groups in the UK Systems and Culture circle and previously worked with the systems realignment project.

A bit of context

Much of the work around creating the current conflict system was done around the beginning of 2020, over a period of six months. As of November 2021, when this website was updated, the team has been on quite a journey, involving a huge amount of learning and various people coming and going. The system is still running, but the truth is that maintaining this kind of system requires a huge amount of capacity and that the capacity of the team has declined since the system was created.

In 2021, the team decided to focus more on resources and training - supporting groups to engage with conflicts themselves, without intervention from the TCT. The resources provided on this website, with the ongoing trainings are the result of this process.

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How we built the conflict system together

Our aim in building this system was to co-create something that is clear, accessible, trustworthy and that people will actually use. It was seen that an important part of this is that it would be community owned.

We hoped to design a system, together with you, to meet this community's needs in relation to painful conflict, tension and justice. To do this we began by collecting

information on your needs for such a system through a poll. To see some of the data we collected, click here. We hoped to find out from your experience, what works well or doesn't work so well when handling conflict, and what would your ideal of a system for responding to conflict be like?

From exploring this ourselves, reading the responses to the poll, the input of people who have worked in this field for years, and having explored this with many other groups and communities, we came up with a list of *some* of the things we might need from a Conflict & Justice System. These are included in the list of criteria here.

We created a proposal of how we could try to meet these needs and shared it with XR UK Working Groups. We held feedback calls with circles both at the centre of XR as well as on the margin. And held open feedback calls that anyone could attend. We also used a form to make sure anyone who wanted to give feedback was able to.

Also resulting from this process was the Transformative Conflict Agreement that was built from the collective wisdom of rebels. It set out to answer: How do we in XR UK wish to collectively respond to conflict when it arises? What would it look like to deal with conflict in a way that is aligned with our principles and values and that we can truly be proud of?

It seemed that everybody wished to have support and processes ready so that rebels could try resolving their own conflicts, by creating mutual understanding and agreements on next steps.

The purpose of the Transformative Conflict team is to hold this agreement and to integrate feedback so it continues to meet the needs of the movement.

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OUR SERVICES

We currently offer two main services, as well as our resources and training:

- A facilitated Transformative Conflict process
- Conflict Coaching.

Conflict Coaching

In cases where the conditions for a TC circle aren't met, we will offer conflict coaching, dependent on the availability of skilled coaches.

Conflict Coaching is a one-on-one process that supports people in working through a particularly difficult or complex conflict, with the aim of mapping out the options and/or next steps. Conflict coaching can also help you develop skills in handling conflict in general.

You will meet with one or two coaches for 1 - 3 sessions of up to an hour, within the space of around one month, depending on the coach and your availability, followed by a review session within the following few weeks.

Coaches themselves will not offer a solution, or advise about how to move forwards with the conflict, but rather, the process is designed to help people understand and disentangle the various threads of any conflict, gain new insights about the situation and ultimately find their own way of moving forwards with the conflict.

Having a dedicated space to talk about a conflict and gain new perspectives can be hugely helpful, so we recommend people to use whatever support is on offer.

To request conflict coaching, please email conflict@rebellion.earth

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Facilitated Conflict Process

Where conditions are right, we offer a Transformative Conflict Process. Part of this will involve a time where all the relevant people get together in the same space with the facilitators.

If you would like to request a process, please email conflict@rebellion.earth a**fter reading this information**, particularly the key piece on willingness and consent. To learn more about how the process was created, click here.

To learn about the conflict process that we offer, please use the links below, or simply scroll down.

- 'What does the conflict process look like?'
- The Dialogue Process
- About the Facilitators
- Timescales & Commitments
- Willingness and consent
- Who needs to be there?
- Agreements
- 'I have been asked to take part in a conflict process'
- When participation in our process isn't appropriate
- Ongoing feedback on the system

What does the conflict process look like?

A Transformative Conflict process is made up of three stages:

- **Initial Meetings**
  - These are one on one conversations between individuals and facilitators.
  - The purpose is to listen and hear what is important to each person, to explain the process, figure out any details and make sure everyone who needs to be at the TC circle is included.
  - One or two Initial Meetings of around 1 hour should be enough, though facilitators may feel that longer is needed.

        - **The Circle**
            - This is the part where participants gather in the same space to engage in the dialogue process.
            - Your facilitator will explain more about arrangements and expectations during the conversation.
            - The purpose is to reach a place of mutual understanding, care and empathy, as well as considering if there are any agreements or specific actions that might help people to move forwards.
        - **Review Meeting**
- When agreements have been made, a review, in person or on Zoom could happen at an agreed appropriate amount of time after the Circle.
        - This will involve reviewing the agreement and considering what has or hasn't been followed, celebrating what's been working and considering making changes to anything that hasn't.

Whilst the Transformative Conflict Circle described here is our default method for handling conflict, in specific cases we might bring in elements of other intuitive or embodied processes such as *Constellations* or *Processwork*. The facilitator is responsible for guiding the process but not the content of the conversation [10].

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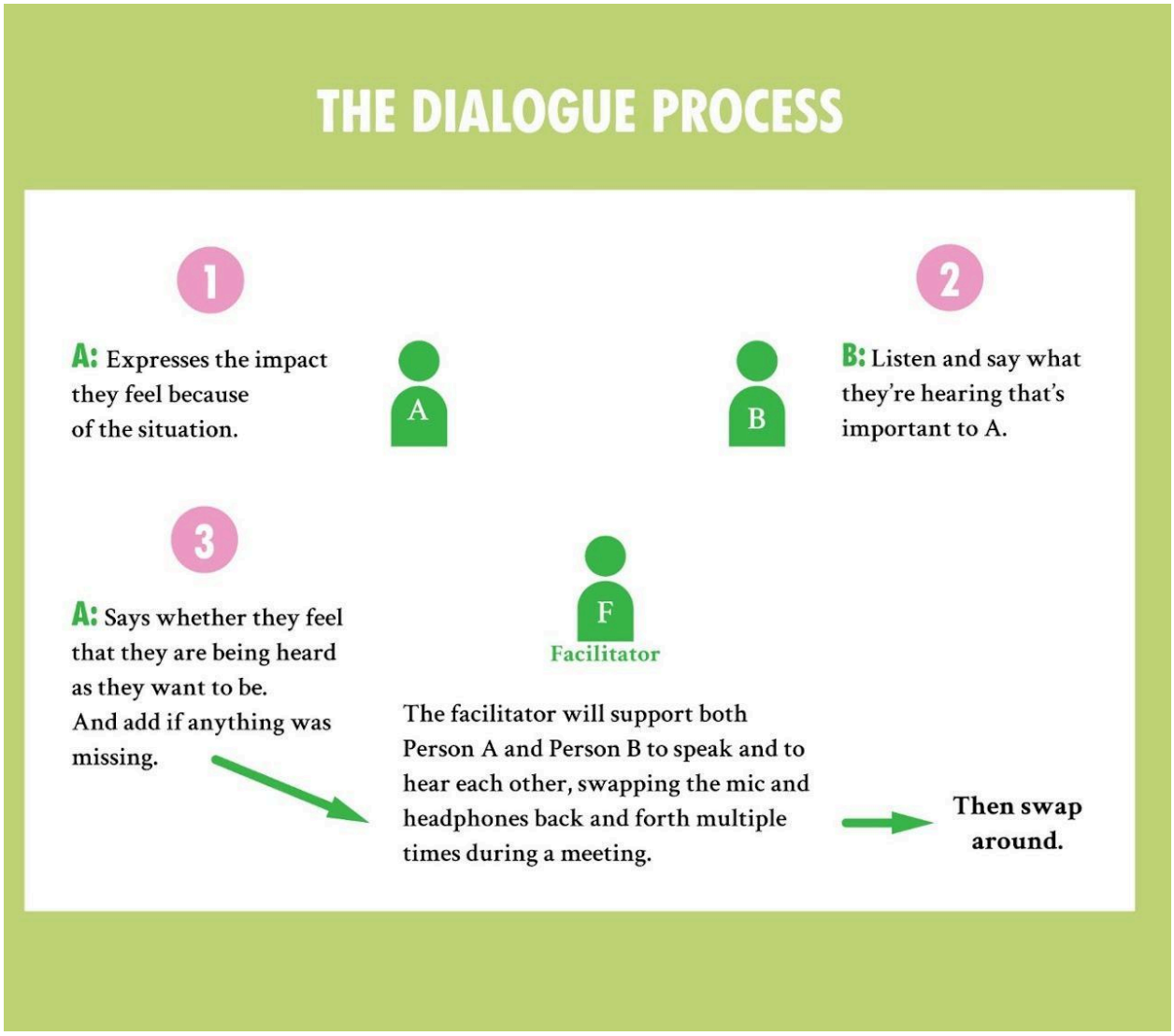
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[10] Facilitators will not in any way say someone is right/wrong, or what "should" happen in the agreements stage of the process

The Dialogue Process

The Dialogue Process is the process that we use to support the conversation between the different parties once they are sitting down together in person or online. It's designed to bring about mutual understanding, empathy and care and essentially it's about listening to each other.

Our process uses a simple method to support participants to listen deeply and to feel heard. Only one person may speak at any time. They have the ‘microphone’. Everybody else listens. One person may be given the ‘headphones’. It is their job to listen to the speaker and - when the speaker has finished - say what they understood was important to the speaker. The speaker then has an opportunity to correct or clarify what it was they really meant, then the listener will summarize or say what they heard the speaker say and so on, until the speaker feels that they have been heard and understood by the listener. When that’s happened, the headphones and microphones are swapped over and will move between different people throughout the session.



This process is fairly similar no matter how many people are involved. With a larger number of people, the dialogue process is still focused on giving everyone the chance to express what they want heard, and the possibility of seeing if it's been heard and taken in in the way they wanted. Some people may speak a lot more than others, or have more to hear than others, (how much people speak or listen is based on who has been impacted in different ways, rather than people who have more power speaking more/hearing less because they have more power).

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About the Facilitators

When a request for support with a conflict has been received and accepted, a request is sent to our pool of trained facilitators. We will take into account and try to accomodate themes and preferences of gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, ability, age, etc., though we cannot guarantee that a facilitator with a particular identity will be available. Facilitators are allocated a dedicated support person who supports them throughout the process.

The pool of facilitators is a group of people that has gone through an initial training of 6 full days with the organisation Navigate, and have committed to ongoing training and practice. During the training many areas were covered in theory and practice, including: self awareness, deep listening, how to be on everyone's side, and many different aspects of power and privilege. The TC team supports the pool of facilitators with organising practice sessions, additional training and regular supervision.

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Timescales and Commitments

As every conflict is different it is not advisable to put timescales on the completion of Transformative Conflict Circles. People will email **conflict@rebellion.earth** to request this kind of support, or to explore whether they want to [9]. We check emails tuesdays - thursdays and aim to get back to you as quickly as possible within those days.

After having confirmed that we will take on the conflict, we will attempt to find a facilitator/s and begin the path to Transformative Conflict Circles as soon as possible, and within 2 weeks.

While we want to support people as swiftly as possible, conflict processes are complex and it can take time to create the conditions for open dialogue to happen. The time required will depend on things like how long the conflict has been going on, the number of people involved, the level of tension and the level of impact. It also will depend on the capacity of the facilitators and the TCT.

We will prioritise tending to urgent cases and with as much care and focus as we are able to. We will communicate clearly and keep the people involved continuously to inform them of which step of the path we are on with regards to the process.

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[9] It's important that this is THE channel for requesting support from the TC team, not messages or calls to people you know in our team. This helps us to protect our boundaries as individuals and to ensure equality of access to the system.

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Willingness and consent

Willingness, or consent is a key ingredient to the success of any conflict process. Put simply, if the relevant people are not willing to really sit and listen to each other in the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation, the process will not succeed.

For this reason, the TCT will not invite facilitators to facilitate a process where there does not exist some willingness amongst the potential participants.

Additionally, the TCT will not seek to persuade or cajole people into engaging with the process. This is partly because we are operating with limited capacity and partly because in reality, a deep and true willingness to engage in dialogue is difficult to create via just a couple of phone calls.

This means that the onus is on the person requesting a conflict circle to communicate with potential participants and gain their consent. Anybody can contact the conflict team for information about the process and everybody should read the relevant information in this website. If you are asking people to participate, it's a good idea to send them this webpage, so they can know what they are agreeing to. You may like to direct them to the section on what to do if you have been asked to participate in a process?

This means that there is a real and painful gap in what we can offer in situations where one person is just not willing to engage in any dialogue and the other person cannot move through the conflict without engaging in dialogue with this person. These situations can be upsetting and feel insurmountable and we recommend people to get support for themselves, take good care of themselves and explore other options.

Creating agreements in your group about how you will engage with conflicts may mean that it is easier for people to engage in dialogue and less difficult to brush away difficulties.

The TCT hopes that people will engage in the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation and that they will take part in a conflict process where it's reasonable to do so. In other words, we are not supporting people to not take part because they just don't fancy it, but to really look deeply and beyond self-interest to see how a conflict process can contribute to creating collective power and strength. That said, there may be any number of situations where it may not be reasonable for people to participate. Please see here for an exploration of this.

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Who needs to be there?

In the initial one-to-one meetings we normally ask each person we speak with to identify who else needs to be part of a circle. There are often quite a few people who are in some way involved in or impacted by a conflict situation, and we recognise that conflict is rarely an individual matter. We seek to involve the people that really need to be there in order to communicate about what has happened, and/or to find a way of moving forward. Because of the limits of resources, we try to make sure that the people who really need to be there are, and not anyone else. We think of those that really need to be there as participants as generally being people who would need:

- to speak, for themselves, and be heard
- to hear from others
- to be part of the agreements to move onwards

There may also be people who are there purely as supporters, not as participants. The process is not about getting more people who see things your way to establish your version of what happened as true, or make your needs better heard. We are trying to create conditions where every participant is heard and everyone's needs are included, no matter the number of people who share their perspective or experiences. We do not offer a courtroom where people call witnesses to win a case.

Generally it is up to the participants to decide who needs to be there. If the participants do not agree about who really needs to be there and there is conflict about this, we will do what we can to figure this out in a way that is OK for everyone.

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Agreements

During the circle itself, The intention of the first part of the process is for the impacts and experiences of the conflict to be heard and understood in ways that support mutual care and empathy. Once everybody's experiences of the conflict have been heard and understood, any hurt caused has been processed and there is a restored sense of trust and will to collaborate, the facilitator/s will support participants in finding agreements.

These may address practical, relational and symbolic elements of what has happened in the past, and of moving forward in a better way. Agreements should be specific and doable within people's capacities.

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'I have been asked to take part in a conflict process'

So you've been asked to participate in a conflict process.

The first thing to remember is that this is not a punitive process - we are not trying to find out who has done what, who is right or wrong, or punish anyone. In this sense, there is no way that someone can 'win' the process or use it to get their way.

The second thing to bear in mind is that the process is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to participate and you can withdraw from the process at any time. That said, we believe that engaging in dialogue around conflict is an important part of any healthy system of organising between people and we hope that people in XR will engage in dialogue when they are in conflict with others.

In some particular situations, which are outlined here (below), we would not expect people to participate in a facilitated process, but generally we would encourage people to take part, even if it might be uncomfortable or inconvenient. In every situation, we encourage you to reflect on your thoughts and feelings around the conflict and to consider the other person and the wider collective, while not forgetting to take care of yourself. You may like to access conflict coaching, other support or our 'conflict first aid' page to help you do this.

If you think that you might be able to address the tension or conflict without the involvement of conflict facilitators, you may like to explore whether some of our tools and resources may be of use.

Finally, you may like to consider whether and to what extent you and the other person will be able to continue working together if the conflict is not addressed. Unaddressed conflicts can lead to people leaving the movement, while engaging with conflicts can help create a sense of togetherness, so it's important to consider the impact of leaving a conflict unaddressed.

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When participation in our process isn't appropriate

There are a number of situations where it may not be advisable to go through the process we offer. Broadly, these fall into two categories:

- where we cannot offer adequate support - where the intensity or subject matter needs more intensive or specialist support or care
- where there are particular reasons for individuals not to take part.

Some examples include:

- situations that involve a significant possibility of creating more trauma if engaged with through the TC Process, even when it is carefully set up and we have organised as much support around it as there is capacity for
- situations involving physical or sexual assault or abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, or any other serious and ongoing harmful behaviour that may also be unlawful. It is worth noting that words like 'violence' and 'abuse' may be understood in different ways by different people and that it is not the aim of the TCT to define in any situation, or in general what constitutes violence or abuse.
- situations involving more overt or explicit prejudice or oppression based on gender, race, class, sexuality, faith/belief, ability, etc. - while acknowledging that these forms of oppression will show up in some way in so many conflict

- situations where someone is in the team with the sole purpose of causing damage to the movement i.e. infiltration
- someone has significant structural* or informal power which means they experience a disproportionately high frequency of conflict and would need to spend a significant part of their time ongoingly in Transformative Circles
- situations where someone from a marginalised identity is experiencing a disproportionately high frequency of conflict due to their identity

**i.e. a formal role with specific authority or decision making power*

HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

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Ongoing Feedback on the System

It was our intention as the TC team to help a system emerge from the needs of the XR organism rather than simply imposing something on XR working groups.

We also saw the real and urgent need for a clear and transparent conflict process within the XR organism to prevent further harm to the movement caused by unclear processes. Therefore we decided to begin with a clear proposal and then continually attain as much feedback as possible so we can iterate and upgrade the system that we have now built.

To ensure we are listening and are receptive to feedback, we will:

- Take feedback from every Transformative Conflict Circle we are involved in.
- Create a system for general feedback on the XR UK TC System and review it ongoingly. Please fill out this form if you would like to give us your valuable feedback.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Here, you will find:

- Introduction to the 'TC Tools' - context and rationale for the four tools below
- Transforming Enemy Images with LASER - a short exercise to do by yourself or with a friendly listener when you are experiencing tensions or difficulties with another person.
- 1 to 1 'Conflict Conversation' guide - a guide to help two people have a conversation about a conflict or tension between them
- Tension Shifting - a technique to address difficulties periodically within your group
- Group Agreements - a guide to creating agreements around how to work together to prevent harmful conflict and promote collaboration
- Workshops - information about the workshops and training offered by the TCT
- Further Reading

Introduction to the 'TC Tools'

These tools were designed in response to the conflicts that were seen to be coming up in XR and are intended to help people to engage with conflicts within their groups in a self-organising way, without needing to engage a third party like the conflict team. They are inspired and informed by well-established techniques and experienced conflict practitioners, as well as the personal experience of the TCT.

They can be understood as something like an artist's paint box - where you, the artist, must use your judgement to select or adapt the tools - choosing the brushes, mixing the paints and so on - as well as your skill to use them in the real world - using the paints and brushes to paint a beautiful picture.

The first picture you paint might not be exactly as you had envisaged it, but practice makes perfect! It is by using the tools that they become alive, skill is developed, and the transformative vision is realised.

Every conflict is unique and will require a unique response. That said, ingredients like curiosity, empathy, kindness and humility are helpful, if not crucial in any

situation. Be aware that the tools cannot replace these ‘soft qualities’ like a willingness to listen and to work together. Where such qualities are totally absent, and dialogue is impossible, the tools might not be appropriate and some outside intervention may be necessary. Use your judgement and talk with supportive colleagues or friends to work out the best way of engaging with your unique conflict.

The tools are necessarily borne out of a particular culture and context and may not be perfect or applicable to every situation or cultural context. One particular blindspot was around issues of racism, power or oppression. The tools may or may not be suitable or able to address situations where these dynamics are at play.

That said, we believe they can be of great benefit to XR, as well as being applicable to a wide variety of groups working together, or personal relationships.

Do not be fooled that the tools can offer a quick fix to conflicts. Engaging with conflicts is a skill that we aren’t usually taught in school, and may go against our ingrained habits. It may be helpful to view your conflict engagement practice as a long term investment that will benefit from cycles of study, application and reflection. A growth mindset and an ongoing commitment to practice and learning will lead to ‘conflict proficiency’ that will bring many benefits to you and those around you.

Also be aware that there is quite a lot to read! So do take your time. At the time of writing, the TCT is hoping to offer the tools in non-written formats and we regret that this is not yet complete. We can offer workshops so do get in touch if you’d like to request one for your group.

Please read, digest, and proceed with courage and care. Good luck!

Transforming Enemy Images with LASER

Please follow this link for the guide, which is in the form of a Google document:

1 to 1 Dialogue Conversation guide

Having a conversation with somebody is a great way to engage with tensions, but it's not always an easy thing to do and having a conversation in the wrong way might even make things worse!

The series of guides explore tools at the different levels from personal self care, interpersonal relationships to systemic issues on a group or movement level. Engaging in conflict at any level can help us all to lay better foundations for resilient groups and the different future our hearts know is possible. Thank you for giving this a go!

'Soft skills' like willingness to listen, humility, empathy and kindness are key ingredients for any such conversation, but even with these qualities, where tensions exist, success is not guaranteed. Following a particular, pre-agreed format can be supportive in helping you to navigate these tricky 'conflict conversations'

We have created this guide that gives lots of detail and suggests a particular format that your conversation could use, as well as links to further reading and techniques.

In this Toolkit of Deep Collaboration practices (also a fantastic resource), you can find a brief, less detailed explanation of a similar process it calls a 'mutual understanding conversation'.

Add annabelle guide maybe

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Tension Shifting

Tension shifting is a technique that can be used within groups of people to address tensions that exist among the group. It should be used regularly to address tensions as and when they arise, dealing with them before they have a chance to start causing problems.

It is a process that is guided by a facilitator which takes place within a dedicated meeting space. The aim is to 'shift' tensions *LINK? so that they are eased or released. This is done by listening to and understanding the person who is feeling tension and then working as a group to address the tension - perhaps by creating action points or agreements, though sometimes simply talking and listening is enough.

Tensions might be to do with how the group is working together, or could be around issues of power, marginalisation, or roles held by group members. Tension shifting can be seen as a form of feedback - an opportunity for reflection and learning and an essential part of a well-functioning group. When groups can practice processing low level tensions together, using short, regular feedback loops, they become more resilient and more able to handle a big tension that might come along.

Please browse the resources below to learn more about the technique.

- Tension Shifting - In depth explanation with key practical considerations and guidance for facilitators (google doc)
- Tension Shifting Guidelines - explains the steps used in tension shifting meetings. Can also be used as a prompt by the facilitator during the meeting. Read time is 10 minutes plus.
- Meeting template generated from the SR project - This meeting template was created by the XR Systems Realignment Project. It contains a template for a tension shifting meeting that is based on the template designed by the TCT, but with some extremely useful alterations and additions - particularly relating to the latter stages of the meeting and issues around governance, role holding and marginalisation. It's well worth looking at and considering how to incorporate some of its suggestions into your own sessions. It also suggests a template for an 'operational' meeting, which may be of interest.
- Tension Shifting Meeting Minutes Template - a minutes template that you could copy & paste into your own minutes document, or simply use as a prompt for the facilitator during the meeting
- Slides and video from a Tension Shifting workshop INSERT
- Sharable Tension Shifting Workshop plan (workshop plan to go with slides and video below)

Group Agreements

Awaiting content

Workshops

Periodically, we run workshops and training about conflict awareness and how to use the tools on this website.

Please join our Mattermost Channel or like our facebook page to find out about upcoming workshops.

Or, if you would like to arrange a workshop for your group, this can be a great way to engage with the topic together and take the tools forward in your group. If you would like to request this please email conflict@rebellion.earth

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CONFLICT FIRST AID

This page presents a kind of first aid step by step process for what to do if you are experiencing conflict.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fIn-8o0RHMWFx5jUKdhFvk6ay9iqmO2lnipcWifABd8/edit#heading=h.s0l00ivhrlyb
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vl8tynj2QGHW5vRtti78OedSc354R-k2qyQnbWfwaJY/edit

What is the content/purpose here??

I suppose this section was more relevant to the XR site… ie there were many steps/stages/avenues we suggest to go through.

On the generic sight, it's broader..

It's basically self - care, GET SUPPORT/ Looking Deeply (LASER) , TOOLS, further support?? No? I can't see anything else there.

Key thing being SUPPORT

“The absence of dialogue is deadly”
- Dominic Barter

Conflicts will come up. Whether they are low level tensions or full-blown conflicts, it’s essential to get support and be kind to yourself. Below, you can find recommendations of practical things you can do to support yourself, as well as links and contacts for support offered within XR and beyond.

CONFLICT FIRST AID *this section needs putting in order in the actual body (headings seem relatively okay?) Please change as you like

- Shpiel/intro (importance of support & self-care)
- Breathe
- Find a supportive listener
- Self Care Practices (ADD)
- Link to tools Add
- Link to ‘get more support’
- (Further resources) *?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/17zP7kMPnDS_XTFC4EuqJBrGry7U1hIhC5rKAAG4WqK4/edit#heading=h.krpil423zmw4

Practical Steps:

Breathe
Find a Supportive Listener
Self-care
Tools and Resources (self-help)
Get Support (link)
TESN
‘Soft Skills’

I'm in conflict - what can I do?

---

conflict first aid:

'I haven't been able to tranform my conflict. moving on.

BREATHE

Breathing deeply and slowly, becoming aware of the sensation of your breath moving in and out of your body can calm you down instantly and help you to see the situation more clearly. Breathing in this way activates the parasympathetic nervous system in your body, making you feel calm, while bringing your awareness to your breath and body can help you to become aware of thoughts and emotions that are present. The acronym RAIN can help you to embrace and process difficult feelings rather than reacting or trying to escape from them.

Find a Supportive Listener

If you are feeling tension or notice a difficult situation or conversation in your group, try to find someone not directly involved in the situation who can really listen to and understand you and who might be able to help you understand and describe how you're feeling. You could try active/empathic listening. This may help you prepare for having a direct conversation with the person/people you are feeling in conflict with. The Rebel2Rebel Telephone listening or TESN may be a good place to find someone if you don't know someone already.

OUR TOOLS & RESOURCES: *check heading

As part of the distributed and self-organising nature of XR, our hope is that conflicts and tensions can be processed by groups themselves. Please click here to view these resources. * add link

GET SUPPORT

Conflict is a part of life. Whether low level tensions or full-blown conflicts, it's essential that you are supported to find the best way through the situation.

This might mean reaching out to a friend or colleague, finding ways to support and take good care of yourself, or reaching out for some more structured support.

On this page you will find information about the support options available to you in XR and beyond. Please use the contents below, or just scroll down.

XRTC Self-help 'Conflict First Aid' resource
XR Trained Emotional Support Network
XR Rebel2Rebel Telephone Active Listening, offered through the TESN
Conflict Coaching
XRTC Facilitated Transformative Conflict process
Further Support Pathways

XRTC Self-help 'Conflict First Aid' resource

These resources exist to help rebels help take good care of themselves and navigate the difficult realm of conflict.

Please click here to access the resource.

XR Trained Emotional Support Network

The Trained Emotional Support Network (TESN) is a network of trained therapists and councillors who have offered their services for free to help rebels experiencing emotional difficulties in the course of their work responding to the climate and ecological emergency.

Please click here for more information, including how to access support.

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XR Rebel2Rebel Telephone Active Listening, offered through the TESN

Feeling anxious, lonely, or just had a bad day? The XR Rebel2Rebel Telephone Active Listening service is up and running! All you need to do is make a request and a trained

and vetted Rebel Active Listener will give you a call. Please note that this is not a counselling/psychotherapy service.

For further information and to gain access to this service please email Rebel2Rebel@tesn.uk.

Conflict Coaching

Conflict Coaching is a one-on-one process that supports people in working through a particularly difficult or complex conflict, with the aim of mapping out the options and/or next steps. Conflict coaching can also help you develop skills in handling conflict in general.

Please click here for more information, including how to access support

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XRTC Facilitated Transformative Conflict process

If you aren't able to manage to resolve the conflict with either Conflict First Aid or Tension Shifting, or if you feel sure that the conflict can't be well held by the team, it probably means you need external support. For more information about the process click here and to request support please email conflict@rebellion.earth

Further Support Pathways

XR and XRTC may not have the capacity to support particularly complex or difficult conflicts.

Particularly in cases with severe emotional or mental difficulties or physical or sexual violence or harrasment, you may wish to reach out to other UK services, such as the NHS.
The wonderful Ceri Buckmaster offers a weekly Listening Hour. Click here for more info.

This webpage contains a directory of UK charities offering specialist psychological support, including for people experiencing addiction, bereavement, mental health problems or domestic abuse and for people from minority ethnic or LGBT groups.

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COMMUNICATE WITH US

CONFLICT@REBELLION.EARTH

The email address for all enquiries to the Transformative Conflict Team is conflict@rebellion.earth This email is checked regularly during weekdays and you should normally receive a response within 1 week.

Please join our Mattermost Channel or like our facebook page to find out about upcoming workshops and communicate with us.

If you're passionate and/or knowledgeable about conflict and may like to join our team, please see the following role descriptions for Team Member and Skilled Facilitator and get in touch.

If you have any feedback for us, please send us an email.