

Living with the CLIMATE CRISIS

Living with the Climate Crisis

Living with the Climate Crisis is a course that aims to help people find their place in the collective project of responding to climate change. At its heart is a clear psychological approach, based on the following principles:

- climate change is distressing: people need support in coping with the difficult feelings that sometimes overwhelm them, and to explore ways to feel joy and satisfaction in a precarious world
- the best means to collective solutions is in supportive groups based in local communities
- people need support in finding their way to a variety of personal, political and community actions
- people need skills in communicating, both publicly and in personal situations

So *Living With the Climate Crisis* focuses on how to cope, how to find strength, how to find your place in the climate movement, and how to communicate well.

Judith Anderson and Rebecca Nestor are now offering *Living with the Climate Crisis* in Oxford, starting in spring 2024 (postponed from September 2023).

Is Living with the Climate Crisis for me?

Yes, if you are someone who is feeling the pull to start making a contribution to the climate movement; to increase what you are already doing; or to find ways to feel better about your contribution. *Living with the Climate Crisis* is for people new to the climate movement and also for experienced activists or campaigners looking to find balance, even to do less. You might be experiencing some difficult feelings or uncertainties. Before you decide to take part we will invite you to a 30-minute conversation with one of us, to work out whether the course is right for you.

What's the commitment?

The course will have a maximum of eight participants. It will consist of two full days and four two-hour meetings, as follows:

- Module One: Coming together and putting down roots (9.30 – 17.00)
- Module Two: Making Wider Connections (three meetings, evenings)
- Module Three: Acting in the Eco-system of change (9.30 – 17.00)
- And a final wrap-up meeting focusing on finding balance (evening)

As well as attending the meetings, participants will receive two documents: a participants' guide, which includes summaries of the meeting contents and space for reflective notes; and *Living Lightly*, detailed advice on reducing your personal carbon footprint.

We will invite you to work with each other in the meetings, and to form supportive pairs to help each other make the progress you want to make.

A key principle for us in offering Living with the Climate Crisis is that it is not a profit-making initiative. The facilitators give their time free, and we try to use spaces that don't charge us. If we need to hire a venue for the meetings, and/or pay for refreshments, we may ask you to make a small contribution to the cost of this.

The meetings in more detail

Module One: coming together and putting down roots

In this full-day meeting we look at the difficult, painful feelings people have when they allow themselves to think properly about the climate crisis. We explore ideas of climate distress and climate anxiety. Questions of identity, values, conflicts with family and friends, experiences of grief, depression, sadness, guilt and shame are all considered. Most importantly, we emphasise that these responses are normal reactions to hearing bad news. They do not indicate that there is something wrong with you, although some people may need help in coping with them. We talk about what helps, identifying the key areas of reliable information; understanding and support from others; taking action; finding balance; and keeping talking.

The meeting also explores what you like and value about your roots, your heritage, your family and those who have taught you most in your life; your present life; your skills, abilities, strengths and values; your hopes, dreams and wishes for life; important people in your life; and the gifts that you have received and that you bring to others. We look at the storms that you have experienced and at what collective support the group members can offer each other for the storms we may face, including forming supportive pairs to meet outside the group meetings.

Module Two: Making Wider Connections

Part One: Talking with family, friends and colleagues

In this meeting we focus on everyday conversations where climate change sometimes comes up but is sometimes avoided because of the conflicts involved. We recall difficult conversations from our own lives, and share these within the group; and we offer a framework and some advice for thinking about them.

Part Two: Using your voice for change

In this meeting we look at how to use story-telling techniques to speak effectively about climate change, and how to frame our messages well for particular groups. We do some practice building up our stories and we invite you to work on your own stories.

Part Three: Pulling it all together

In this final meeting of Module Two we invite you to practise talking with friends and family, and try out telling your stories to each other.

Module Three: Acting in the Eco-system of change

In this second full-day meeting we explore your personal impact and contribution to local collective action. We look at personal carbon footprints and how to reduce

them. We explore some of the numbers involved in order to see how to make a big difference most easily; and we talk about change, what makes change easy or difficult and how group members feel about making these kinds of changes.

Moving on to your wider impact, we look at the different ways you can join together with others to make a difference, recognising that each person needs to find a place where they can flourish. We explore our webs of connection and how different these can be; the different kinds of skills we may be able to contribute; our feelings about being involved in political, community and workplace action; and how to target particular organisations we're connected to.

We end the day by working with a 'reflective practice' process to explore participants' options for action, reflecting with the group on what might be possible for them.

Last meeting: Balancing your life

In this final meeting we look back on the life of this group, share what it has been like for us and how we feel as it ends, and explore what might come next.

What have previous participants said about Living with the Climate Crisis?

"Living with the Climate Crisis – helped me find my story, my journey to the present. It empowered me so that I could see how much I had to contribute not only to just live with the climate crisis but how to resist it in even more skilful ways."

"I am so grateful for being given the opportunity to take part in this course. Having a weekly opportunity to step back from everyday life and really think about how I can live with more equilibrium in the climate emergency was hugely valuable for me. It was an honour to take this journey alongside other committed people. I now feel better prepared to move forward in my life – to have the difficult conversations that need to happen and to feel grounded in my activism. Thank you so much for making this possible."

"This course helped me to achieve focus around my role in the climate crisis and reminded me that I need to make time to enjoy life alongside climate action."

Who created Living with the Climate Crisis and who will be running it?

The programme has been written and designed by:

Rosemary Randall, a psychotherapist with a long history of involvement in the climate movement. She has written and published widely on the psychology of climate change. She is co-founder of the Carbon Conversations project, a founder member of the Climate Psychology Alliance and is currently active with Cambridge Climate Therapists.

Andy Brown, an engineer with a background in the social sciences. Before retirement he worked in research for the built environment. He is a co-founder of the Carbon Conversations project and has been a life-long supporter of environmental causes.

Dr Daniela Fernandez-Catherall, a Chartered Clinical Psychologist (BPS) with particular interests in narrative therapy and community psychology. She is currently working with Cambridge Climate Therapists on the development of community practices to support people experiencing difficulties related to the climate crisis.

Rebecca Nestor, an organisational consultant, coach and professional facilitator who has recently completed a doctorate on the emotional experience of working in climate change organisations. Rebecca is currently a board member of the Climate Psychology Alliance and is chair of Low Carbon Oxford North.

The facilitators for this course are Rebecca Nestor and **Judith Anderson**. Judith is a long-standing member of the Climate Psychology Alliance and is currently its chair. She is a Jungian psychotherapist who has been involved most of her adult life in the social justice and climate movements.

What next?

If you are interested in taking part, contact Rebecca Nestor by email rebecca@rebeccanestor.co.uk or phone 07702 577929 to express interest. We will set up a 30-minute conversation with either Rebecca or Judith to help decide whether the course is right for you, and we will send you the dates when these are confirmed. We won't ask you to make a commitment until after this conversation.