

Climate Conversations

Peer support for the climate crisis

The principles of peer support

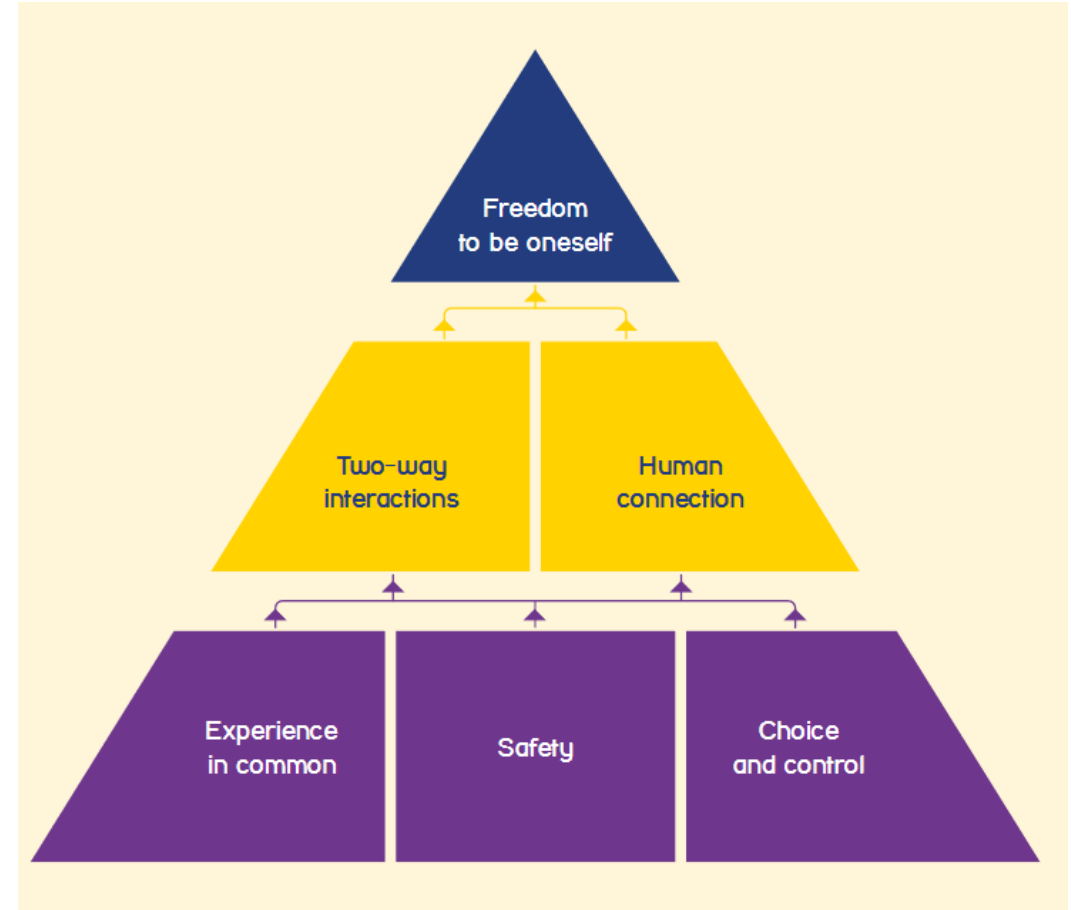
Peer support is a group of people who get together with a common concern to give and receive support.

The foundations:

1. We're all concerned about what's happening to our environment and climate change.
2. Together we create a safe environment to talk in.
3. You can go at our own pace and decide what's right for you.

When these foundations are in place:

- We can begin to have real conversations and feel connected to others.
- Hopefully, you feel comfortable to be yourself.



Feeling safe

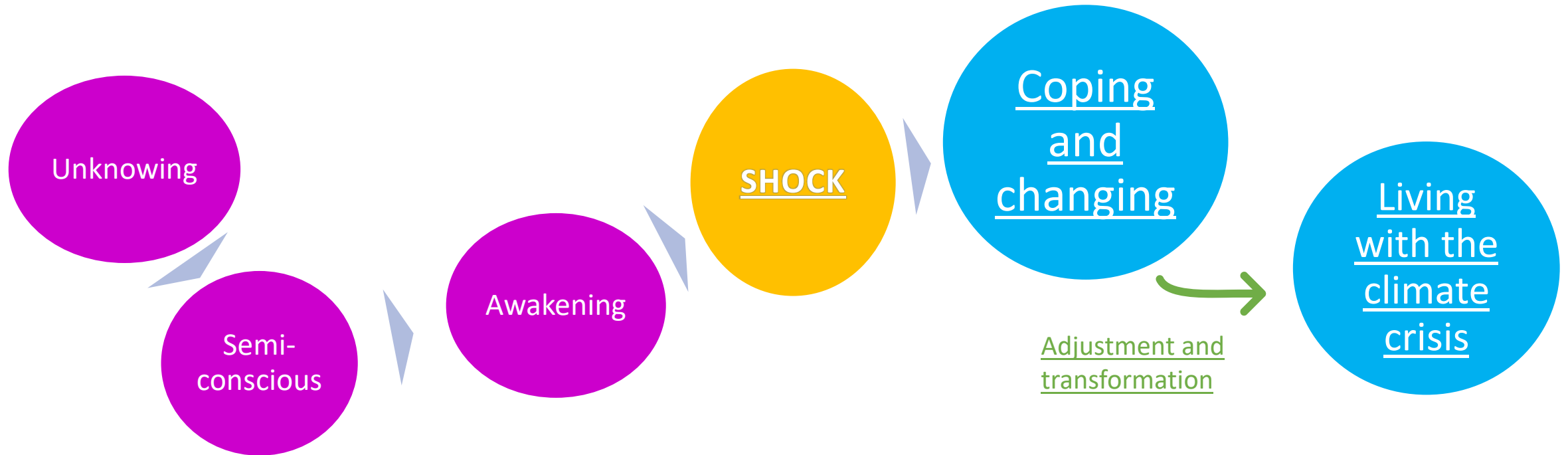
Talking about climate change can be difficult. To create physical and emotional safety we have a facilitator and a [plan](#) to work from. We also use this group agreement, so we know what to expect from each other:

Group agreement:

1. We listen.
2. We avoid giving advice (unless it's requested!).
3. We keep each other's details and stories confidential.

Can you agree to do this? Is there anything else you need?

The process of climate anxiety and grief

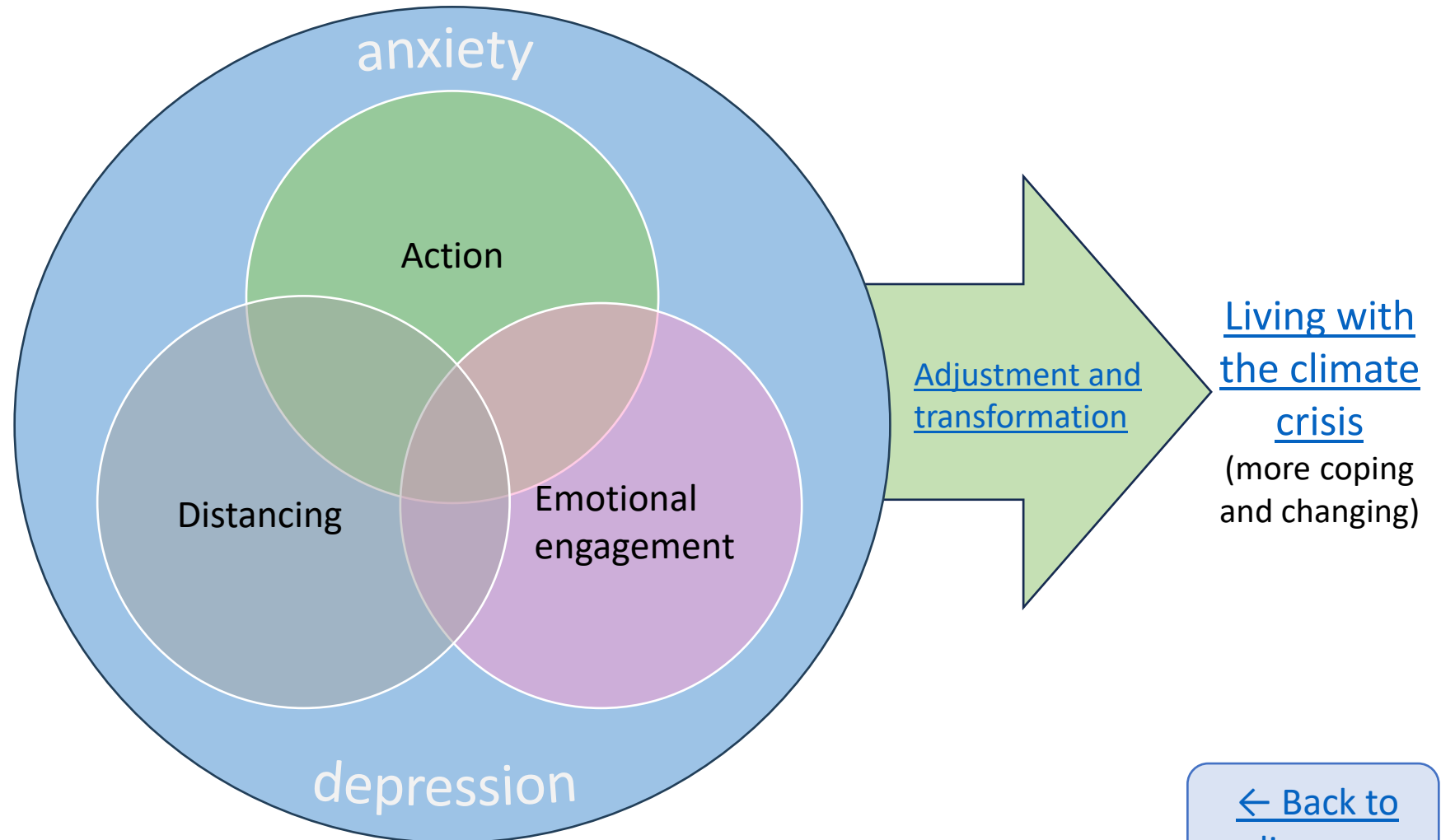


- Many other people are grappling with the same thing, even if that's not always obvious.
- There are people who have been through this process who we can learn from.
- Our experience of the process will be different. It's influenced by our society, history and individual circumstances.

[Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala's Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief](#)

Coping and changing

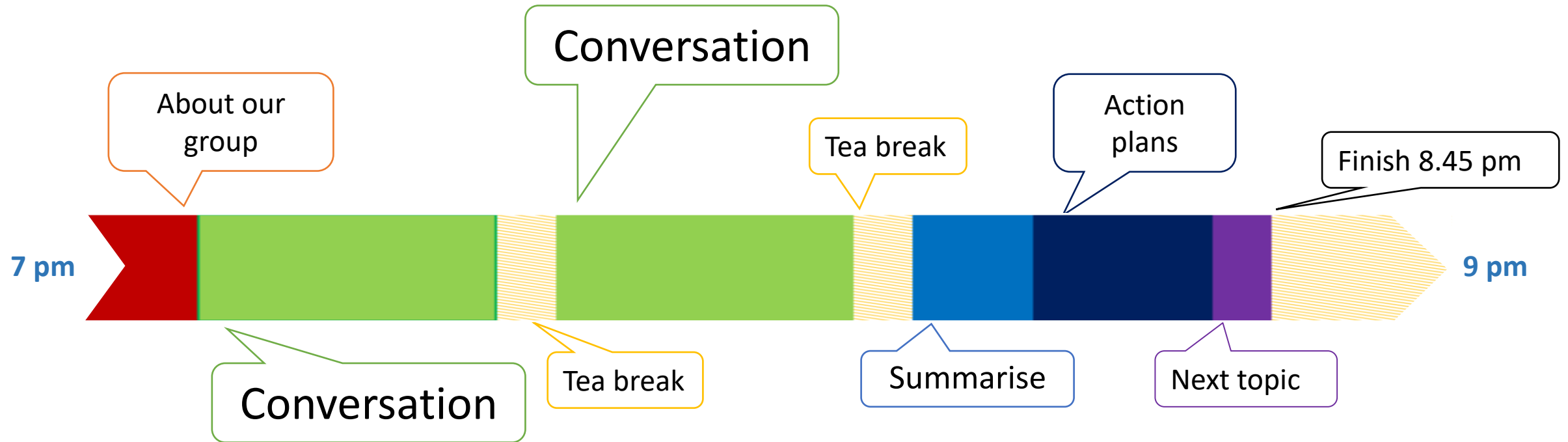
- Healthy coping and changing needs all three areas.
- It's complicated and messy. It's not a linear process.
- Coping can be constructive or lead to disengagement.
- Our aim is to support each other as we find ways of coping that are sustainable for us and the planet. And, as our lifestyles, practices and beliefs change in response to the crisis.



[Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala's Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief](#)

[← Back to diagram](#)

Our plan for today



Conversation

Talking to children and young people.

Where we are now:

- [Telling our stories](#)

Advice from experts:

- [Video how to talk to children about climate change](#)
- [Learn more about Caroline Hickman's research](#)
- [Save the Children](#)

Starting a conversation

- [The Tantrum that Changed the World](#)
- [Book lists](#)

Science for children

- [Information websites](#)

What is your story?

Once upon a time...

A grownup wanted to talk to a child about the climate crisis.

They wanted to talk to_____.

They wanted to tell them _____.

They wanted to find out_____.

They were hoping that _____.

They were worried that _____.

[← Back to
index](#)

[→ Forward to
notes](#)

What's your experience of talking to children about climate change?

[← Back to index](#)

[→ Forward to notes](#)

How to talk to children about climate change




How to talk with children about climate change

🕒 3:36 | 15.6K VIEWS

Climate change can feel overwhelming, particularly for children. What's the best way to talk about the issue?

Animated by Flock, 13 April 2023



Made in partnership with
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[← Back to index](#)

[→ Forward to notes](#)

Learn more about Caroline Hickman's research

- Hickman, Caroline, Elizabeth Marks, Panu Pihkala, Susan Clayton, R. Eric Lewandowski, Elouise E. Mayall, Britt Wray, Catriona Mellor, and Lise van Susteren. “Climate Anxiety in Children and Young People and Their Beliefs about Government Responses to Climate Change: A Global Survey.” *The Lancet Planetary Health* 5, no. 12 (December 1, 2021): e863–73. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00278-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3).
- [I'm a psychotherapist – what I've learned from listening to children talk about climate change](#)

[← Back to index](#)

[→ Forward to notes](#)

How to talk to children about climate change by Save the Children

- [How to talk to children about climate change | Save the Children International](#)
 - Hear them out
 - Rely on science
 - Tailor the conversation to the child
 - Make clear it's not their problem to solve
 - Take action together

[← Back to
index](#)

[→ Forward to
notes](#)

The Tantrum That Saved The World

The story, Herbert says, is an allegory. Though no Bengal tigers or pink flamingos will ever knock on anyone's door asking for help, "we're leaving this problem on the doorstep of the children that we're bringing into the world now," she says. And Herbert wanted to empower children — and adults — to be part of the solution. The book comes with a poster listing things kids and parents can do to make a difference: turn off unnecessary lights, ride your bike or take public transport instead of driving, avoid using disposable plastic items like plastic bags and water bottles, buy second-hand stuff, and shop locally.

Herbert says it took six months of brainstorming before settling on the current story. Some initial story ideas weren't very relatable to children; others were just too bleak. "The worst thing to do is, 'Here's this horrible problem. The end,'" Herbert tells *The Verge*. "You can't give information to adults or children that makes them feel powerless and overwhelmed, and then not give them any sort of feeling that they can do something about this." That's where the "World Saving Action Plan" poster comes in. Herbert hopes readers will hang it in the living room so that the whole family — especially children — can take little steps that will help solve climate change.

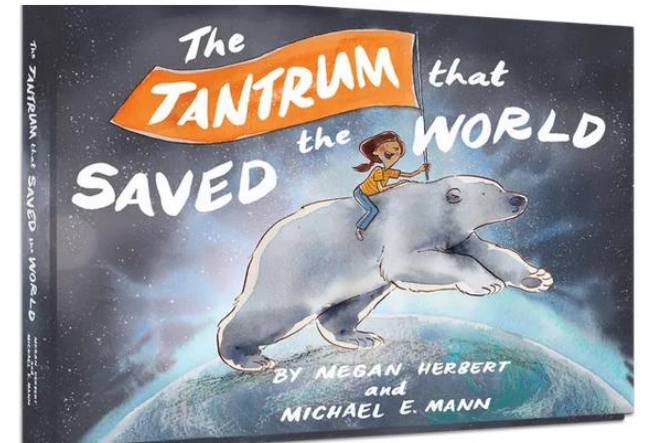


Illustration by Megan Herbert

[← Back to index](#)

[→ Forward to notes](#)

Books for children

- [The School Reading List](#)

UK based. Books for all age groups.

“The School Reading List is curated and reviewed by a small group of librarians, English teachers and parents who meet in school holidays to discuss books that have worked well with groups of children, new releases within the last 12 months and the shortlists for children’s literature awards. Our reading book lists are reviewed and revised monthly.”

- [8 Great Climate Change Books for Kids](#)

EARTH.ORG. US based environmental news website.

- [14 Actually Good Books to Teach Children About Climate Change](#)

US magazine

[← Back to index](#)

[→ Forward to notes](#)

Factual information about climate change

- [Climate Kids](#)
- [BBC Bitesize](#)

[← Back to
index](#)

[→ Forward to
notes](#)

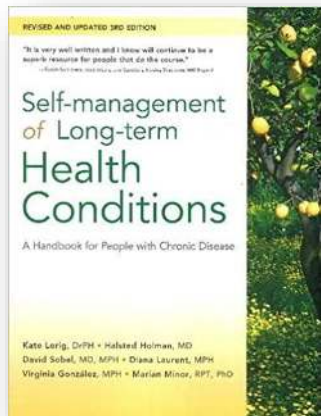
Notes

We share notes from the meeting to our email list and on the website.

- What would you like to remember from this meeting?
- What might be useful in the future?
- Is there anything you'd rather we didn't include?

Putting it into practice

Dream big, start small!



'Self-Management of Long-Term Health Conditions', written by Kate Lorig and other authors and published in 2014

It doesn't always go to plan!

If you didn't complete your plan...

- Did you learn something useful from doing it?
- Can you adjust your plan and try again?
- Or do you want to set it aside for now and work on something else?
- Sometimes, when we've tried everything we can think of we have to admit the problem isn't ready to be solved.

How did you get on with your plans?

Different approaches

Action plans are useful for breaking down goals and problems but they're not the only way of making changes.

- Intuition
- Willpower
- Professional support

And sometimes it's not the right time to be making changes.

- Maintenance mode
- Rest

Action plans

1. Identify a problem or goal.
2. Make a list of ideas.
3. Choose an option to experiment with.
4. Plan what you will do in the next two weeks: say exactly what, when, where, how much, and how often.
5. Write out your plan and keep it somewhere visible.

Example:

I will keep a diary of when I use the car. I'll write it in my diary after dinner on 10 days. I'll set an alarm on my phone to remind me to fill out the diary.

Step 1. Identify a problem or goal

1. List some of the things that matter to you.
2. Choose one to work on and mark it with a star.

Examples of problems

I can't give up my car as I need it to get to work.

Examples of goals

I want to use my car less.

Step 2. make a list of your options

1. List all the ways you can think of to solve your problem or reach your goals.

Tip: Don't be too quick to discount an idea.

Step 3: choose one option to try out

1. Put a star next to one item on your list.
2. Don't worry if it still seems too big, or if it seems too small.

Tip: make sure it's something that *you* want to do.

Step 4: Decide what you will do in the next two weeks

1. Be specific. Think about what, when, how often or how much?
2. Is your plan realistic? How likely are you to carry it out? (adjust the plan if you need to).
3. How will you remember to follow your plan?

Tip: start slowly and start from where you are. Carry out a reality check and adjust your plan if you need to.

Action plans

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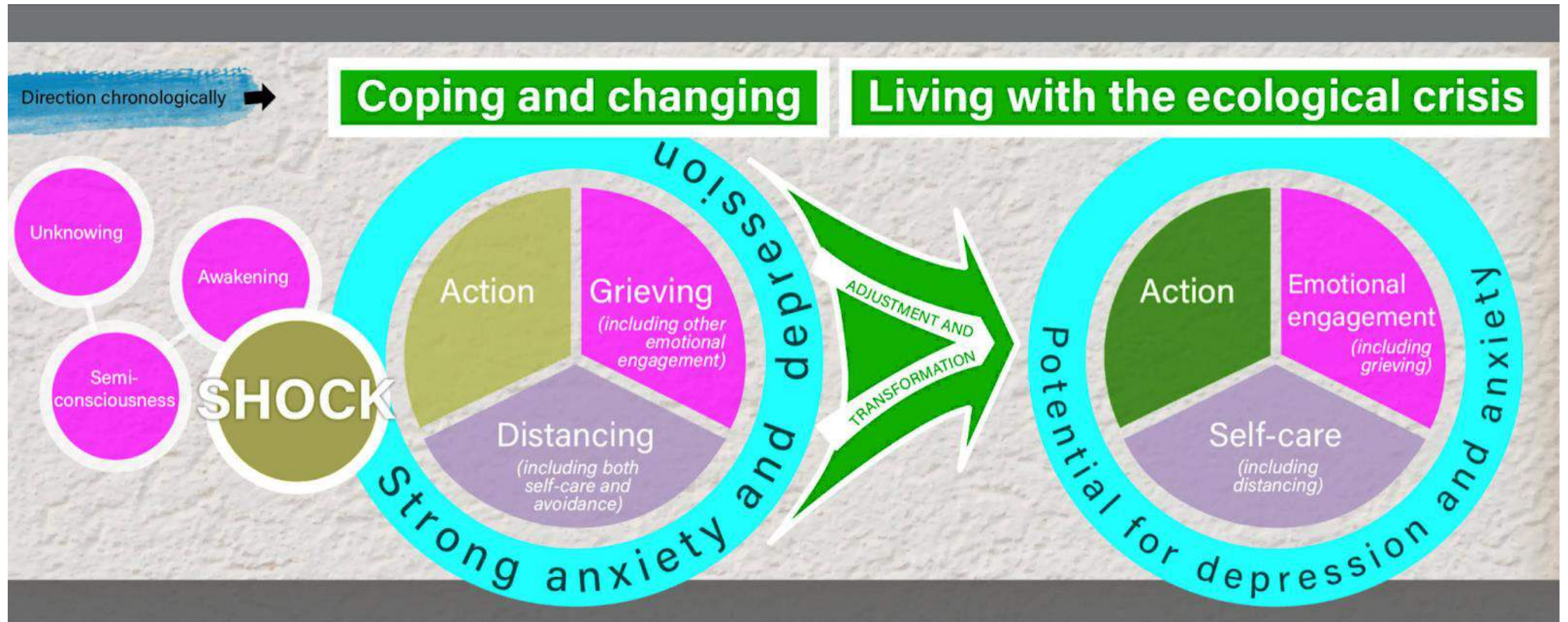
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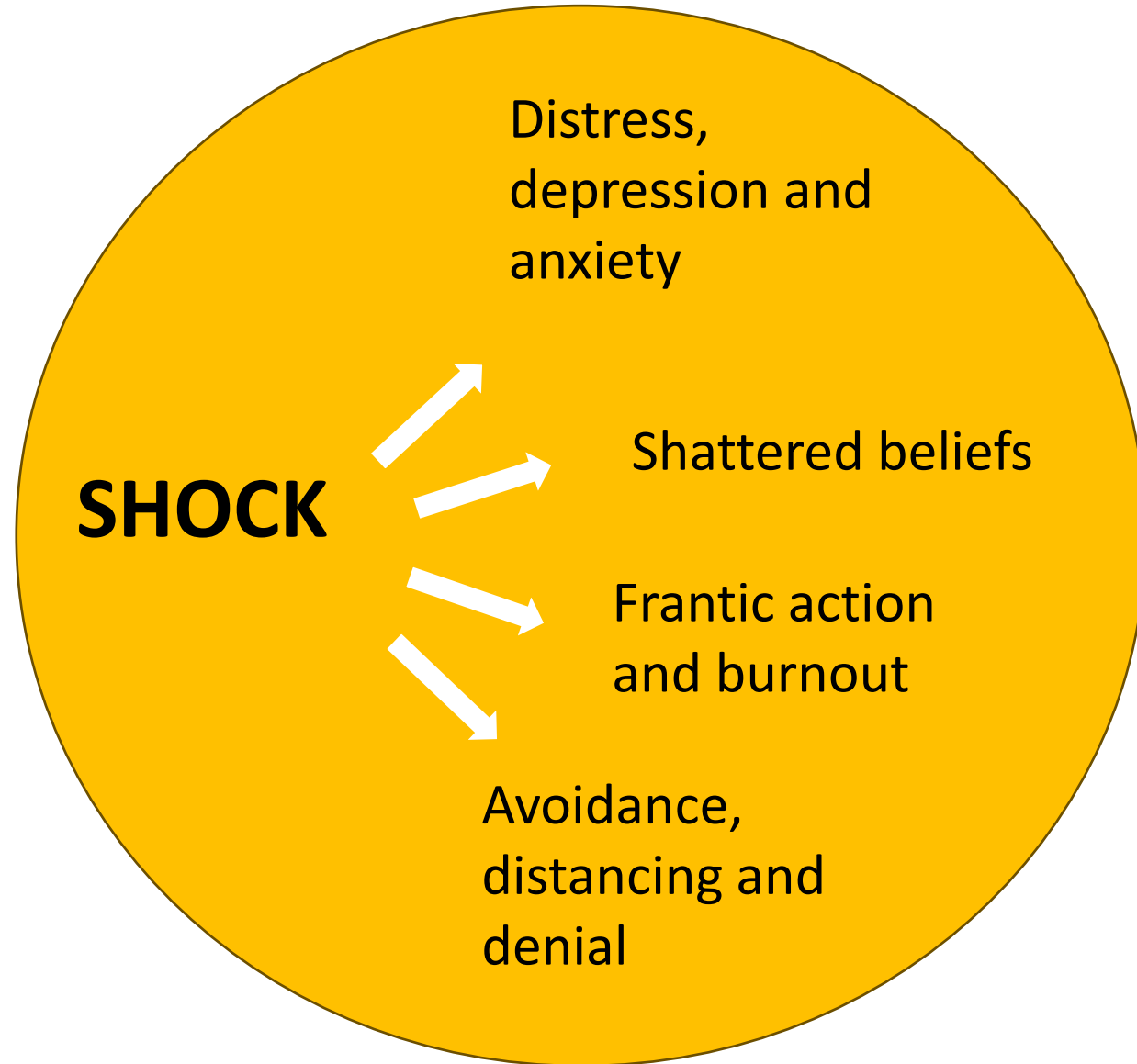
The topic for next time

Feelings	Actions	Distancing	(Re)Thinking
Hope	Carbon footprints and changing our individual behaviour	Denial as a defence mechanism	Intersectional environmentalism
Hypocrisy	Lobbying, campaigning and talking to politicians	Practicing self-care	Climate justice
Kindness	What difference can one person make?	Barriers to self-care	What do we want the future to look like?
Guilt	Conversations about climate change.	Avoidance	The process diagram of coping and changing
Loss and grief	Talking about climate change with children and young people	Disavowal	Uncertainty
Helplessness	Personal, political and practical spheres of action		Change
Joy and pleasure	Protest and activism		Finding the root cause of climate Change
Anger	Changing society		Personal agency and society
Worry and anxiety			Interconnectedness

The Process of Eco-Anxiety and Ecological Grief



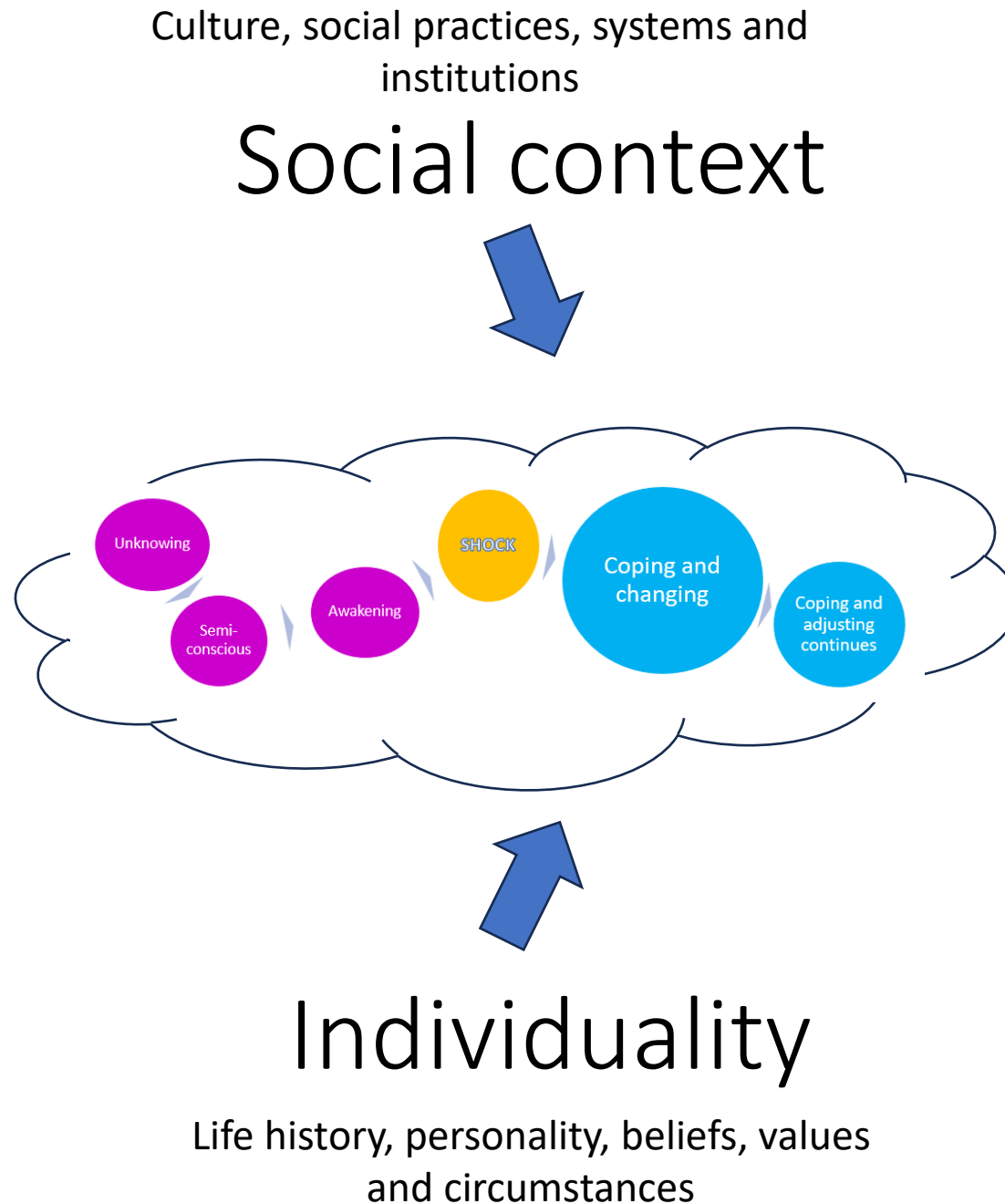
Shock



[Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala 'Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief'](#)

[← Back to process diagram](#)

How we cope and respond is shaped by personal and social factors



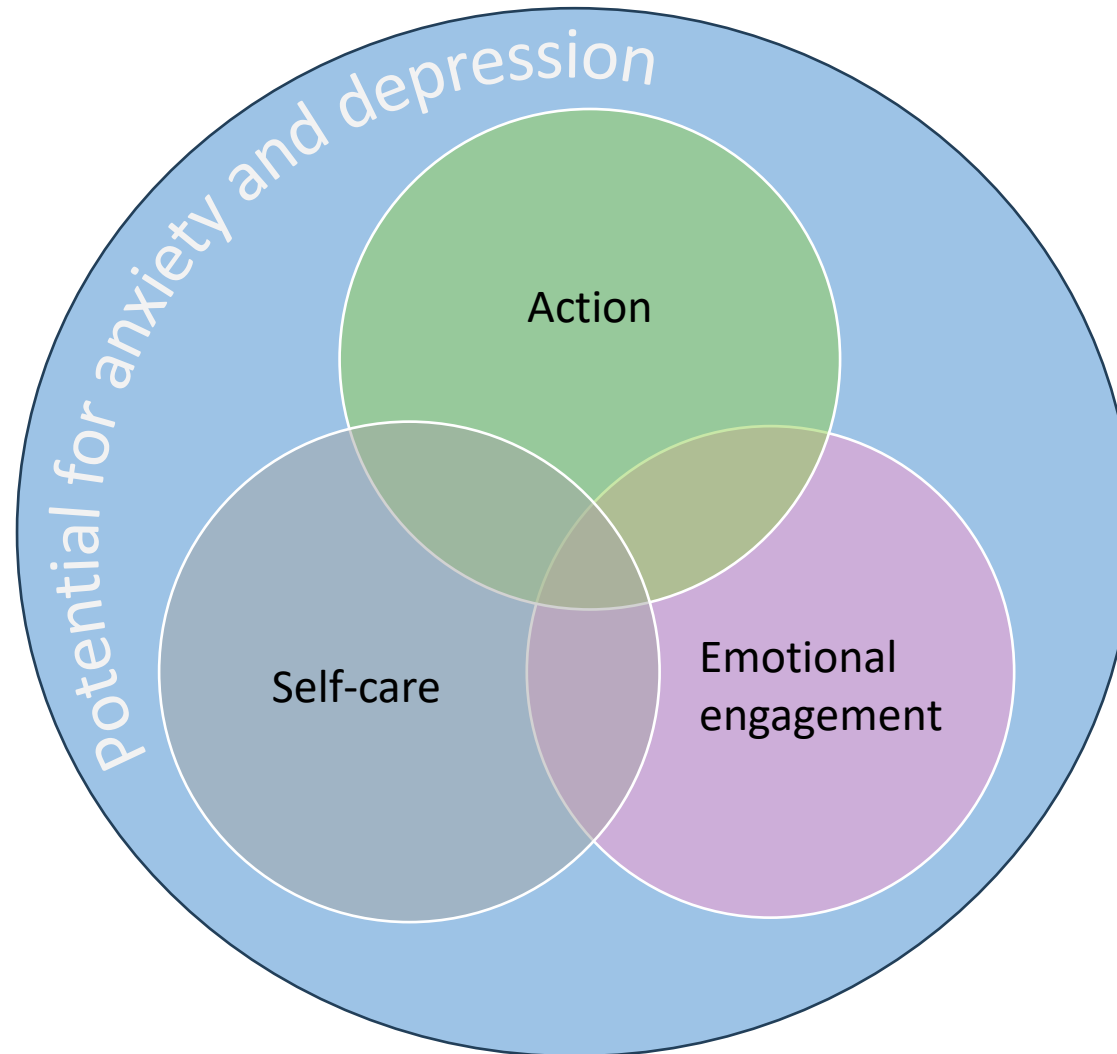
Adjustment and transformation

- New ideas:
 - Worldview
 - Values
 - Beliefs
- New ways of doing things:
 - Habits
 - Practices
 - Lifestyle
- New ways of being:
 - Coping strategies
 - Personal traits

[← Back to diagram](#)

Living with the climate crisis

- More balance, understanding and control.
- Still a need for all three areas.
- New shocks might create new needs for coping and changing.
- Happening against a background potential for depression and anxiety.



[← Back to diagram](#)