

Climate Conversations

Peer support for the climate crisis

The principles of peer support

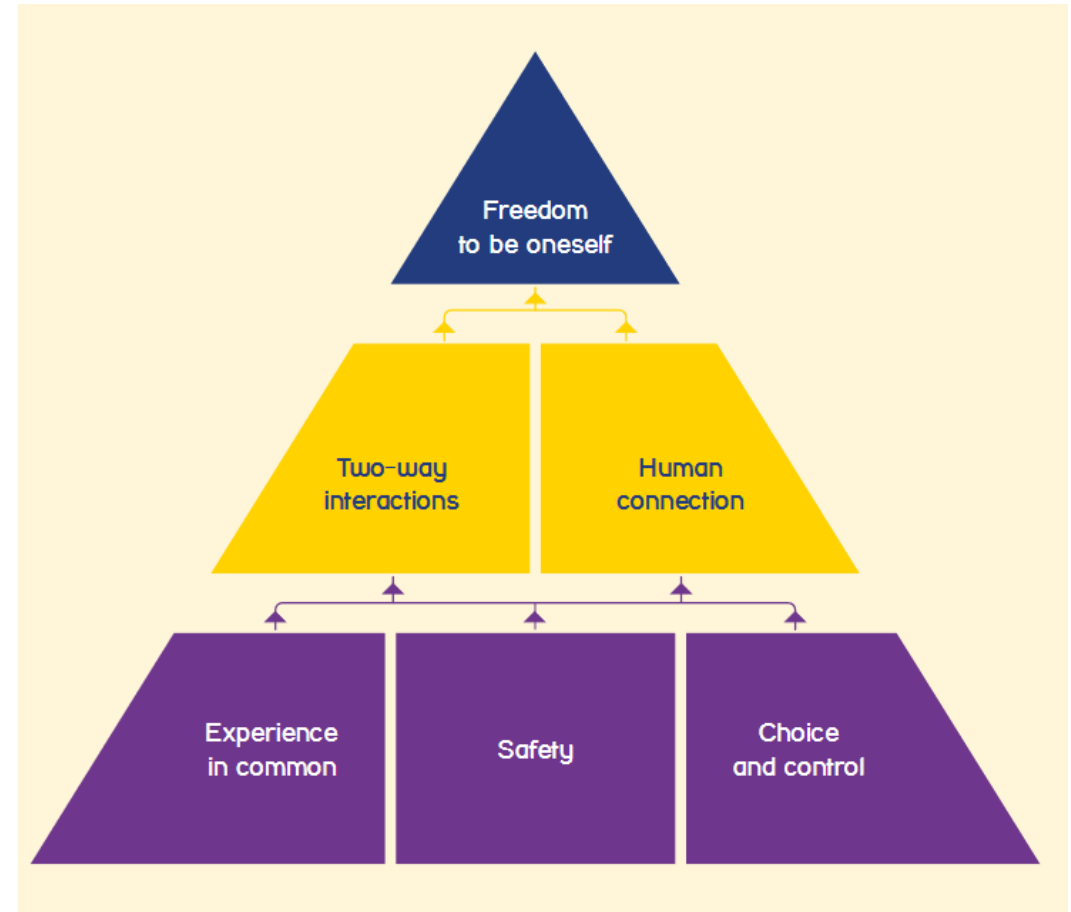
Peer support is a group of people who get together with a common concern to give and receive support.

The foundations:

1. We're all concerned about what's happening to our ecosystem 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.



Creating a safe space to talk in

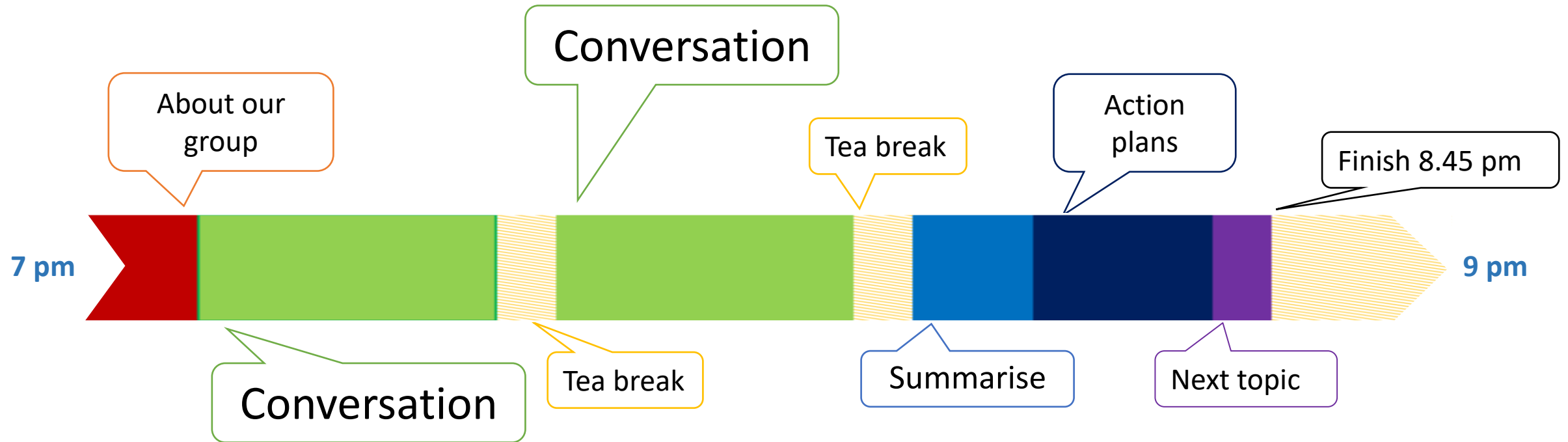
Talking about climate change can be difficult. To create physical and emotional safety we have a facilitator and a [plan](#) that structures our conversation. We also use this group agreement, so we know what to expect from each other and share responsibility:

Group agreement:

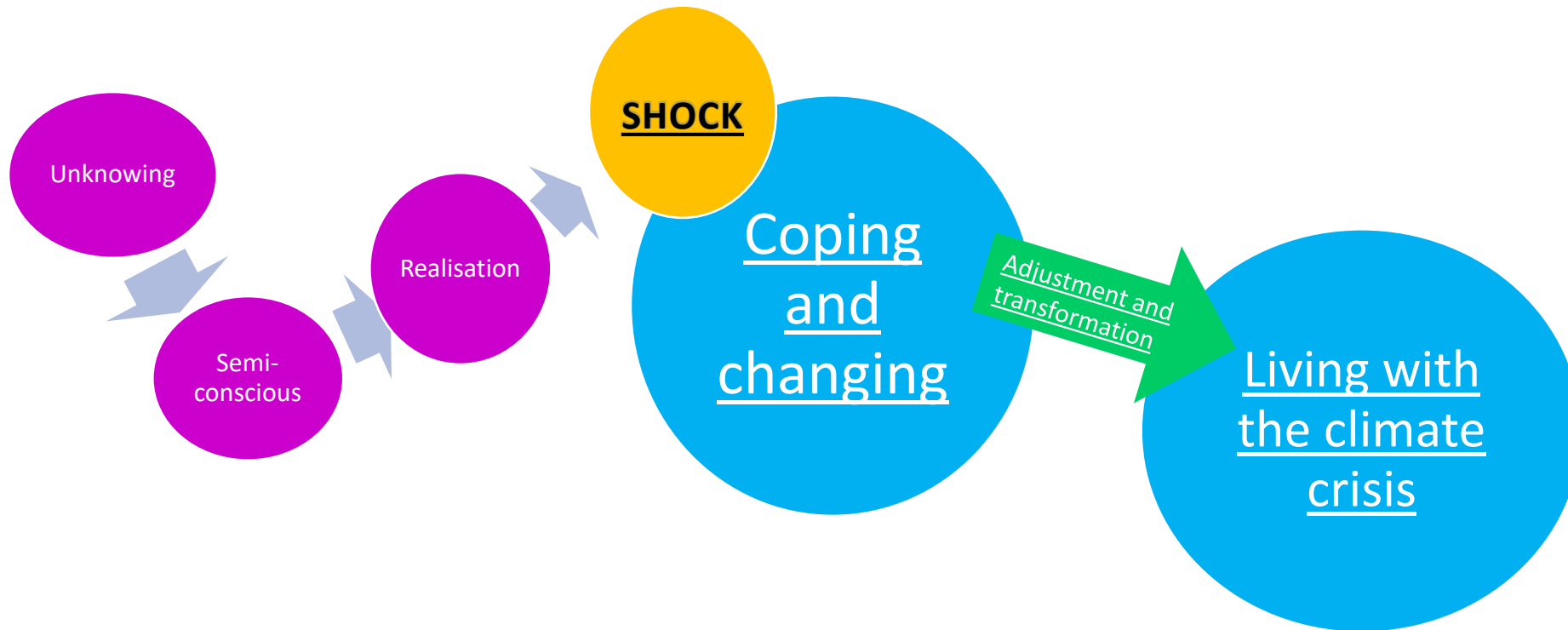
1. We listen to understand each other.
2. We avoid giving advice - unless it's requested!
3. We keep each other's details and stories confidential.

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

Our plan for today



The process of climate anxiety and grief



This research tells us:

- We're not the only ones struggling.
- It is possible to adapt and cope.
- There aren't any quick fixes.

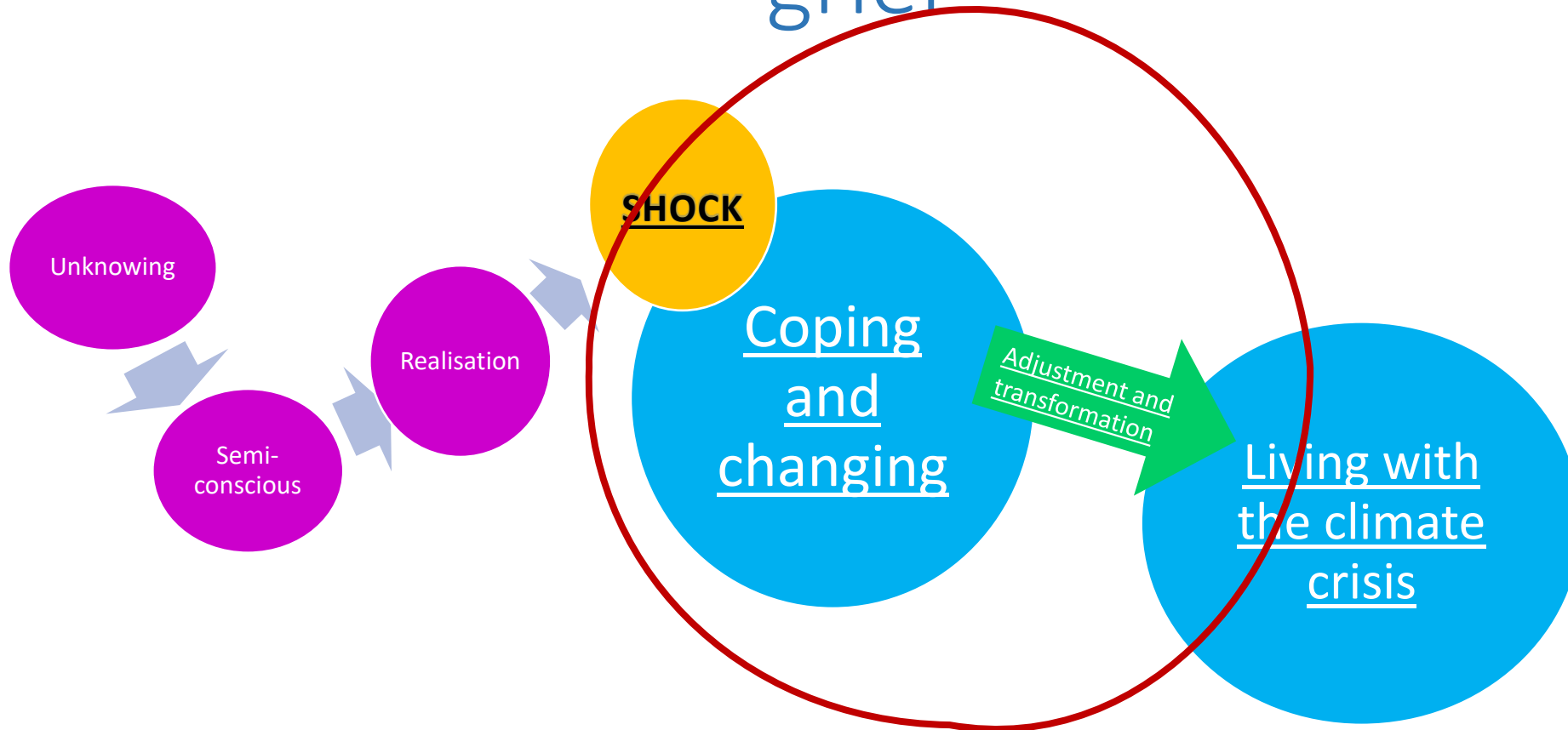
Peer support can offer:

- Social support
- Long-term

Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala's Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief

⇒
[conversation](#)

The process of climate anxiety and grief



This research tells us:

- We're not the only ones struggling.
- It is possible to adapt and cope.
- There aren't any quick fixes.

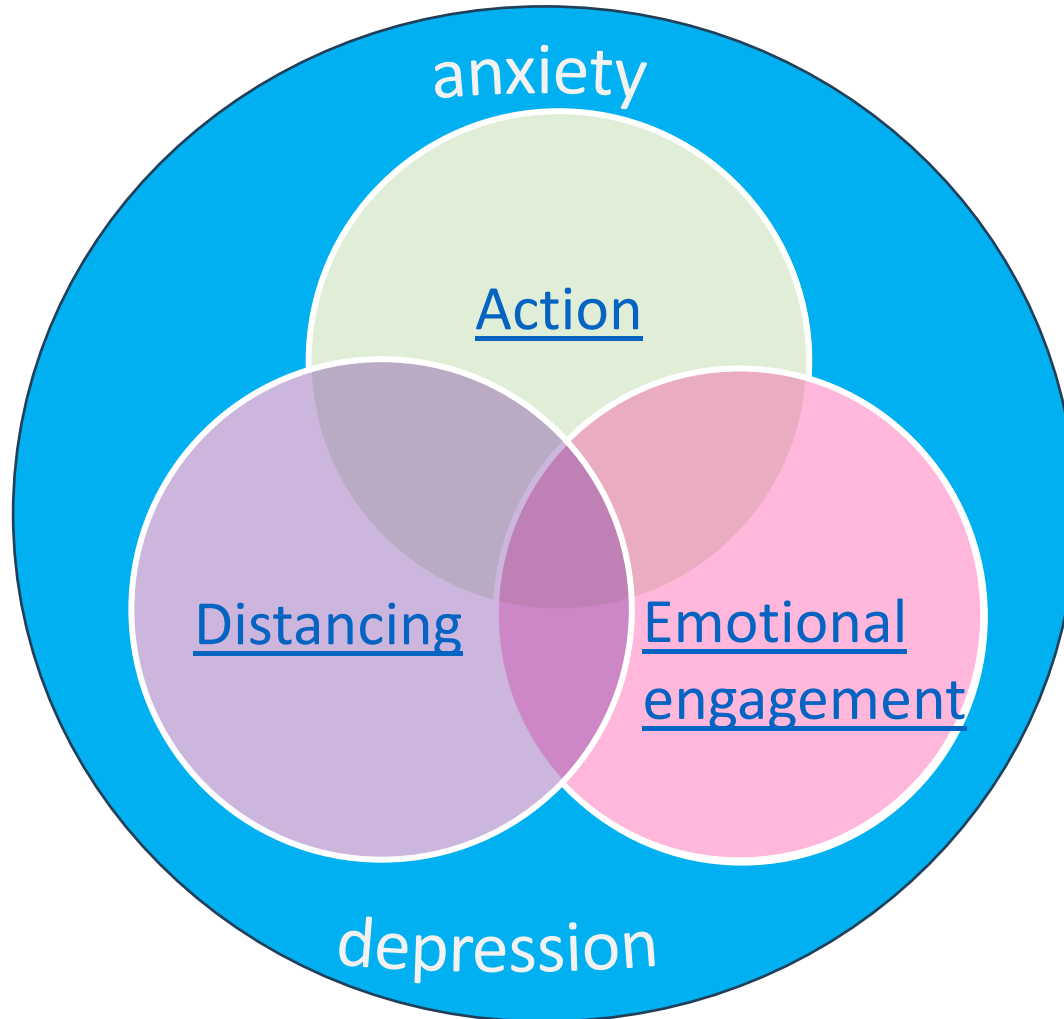
Peer support can offer:

- Social support
- Long-term

Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala's Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief

⇒
[conversation](#)

The coping and changing phase



Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala's Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief

This research tells us:

- Once we know about climate crisis, we have to respond.
- Our responses might be automatic or deliberate.
- We all respond differently.
- Healthy coping needs all three areas.

Peer support can offer:

- Opportunity to explore what we can do.
- Space to think and reflect.
- Choice and control over what you engage with.

[←
process diagram](#)

[→
conversation](#)

Conversation

Is there any point in writing to my MP?

Is there any point in writing to my MP?
What's your gut feeling?

- What goes across your mind?
- What do you feel?

What do we want to get from writing?

- What outcome do we want?
- What do we want for ourselves?

What our MPs can do

Table a question to the relevant minister or department.

Contact ministers directly about the issue.

Speak at an event or pledge support for a campaign (at their discretion)

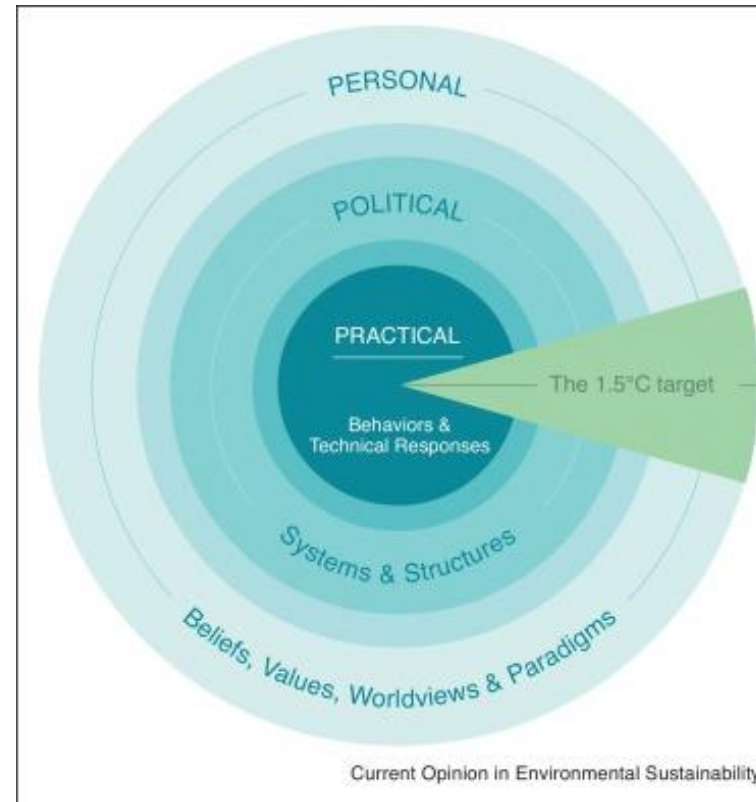
Ezaydi, Shahed. "Here's How You Can Write to Your MP and What It Can Achieve." *The Big Issue*, April 13, 2022. <https://www.bigissue.com/news/activism/heres-how-you-can-write-to-your-mp-and-what-it-can-achieve/>.

Astbury. "Does Writing to Your MP Actually Work?" *Amnesty International UK* (blog), 01 2017. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/ether/does-writing-your-mp-actually-work>.

Three Spheres of Transformation

Which sphere does writing to your MP belong to?

How could writing to your MP interact or influence the other spheres?



O'Brien, Karen. "Is the 1.5°C Target Possible? Exploring the Three Spheres of Transformation." *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, Sustainability governance and transformation 2018, 31 (April 1, 2018): 153–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2018.04.010>.

Greenpeace: why it's worth contacting your MP about the environment

“ Campaigning is what we do, it's why we're here and it's what we believe in. But I know with such huge global problems to be solved, it can often feel overwhelming. We can feel so small, our contributions insufficient.

Fighting for political change often means contacting your local MP, and I get it – it can feel like it's not making a difference.

But I've been working in politics and political campaigning for a few years, and I've seen first-hand how powerful it can be. It's always good to go bigger and bolder in our work to make the world a better place. But when we work together, even small, simple actions can be really powerful. So I'm going to run through some of the biggest challenges with political campaigning, and explain why it's still worth doing!

<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/contact-mp-political-campaigning/>

Useful organisations and websites

[They Work for You](#)

Find out who your MP is, their contact details and how they've voted in the past.

[Hope for the Future](#)

A charity that aims to help constituents have conversations with their MPs.

[Write to Them](#)

Contact details for your councillors and MP

[Greenpeace Let's Lobby Our MPs](#)

Advice on how to write to your MP including a sample letter

Some things to think about when deciding where to put our effort and energy

(Off the top of my head)

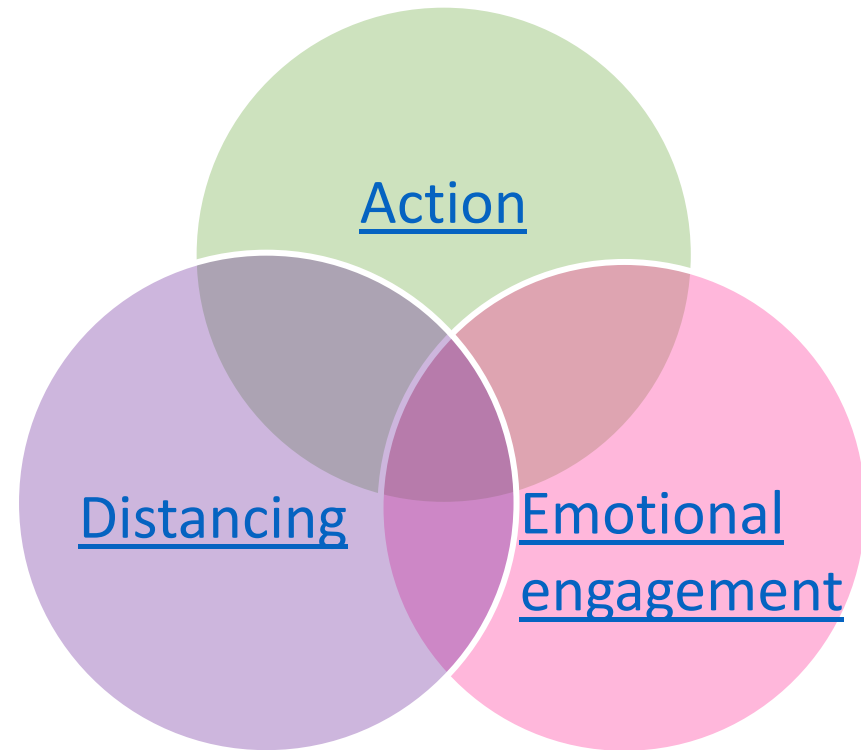
- Co-benefits and side effects
- Potential rewards, potential risks
- Opportunity cost (what you could be doing instead)
- Your values
- What's right (ethics and morals)
- What are you good at?
- What do you enjoy?
- What needs to be done?
- What else is going on in your life right now? Do you have the energy and resources?
- What kind of future do you want to bring about? Is this a step toward it?

Notes

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

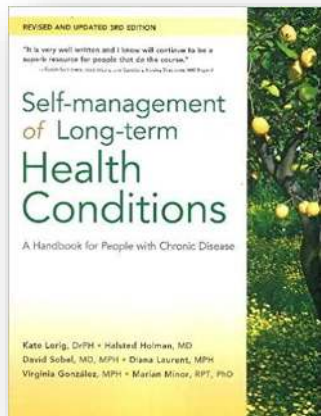
- What would you like to remember from this meeting?
- What might be useful in the future?
- Is there anything you'd rather we didn't include?

Topic for next time?



Putting it into practice

Dream big, start small!

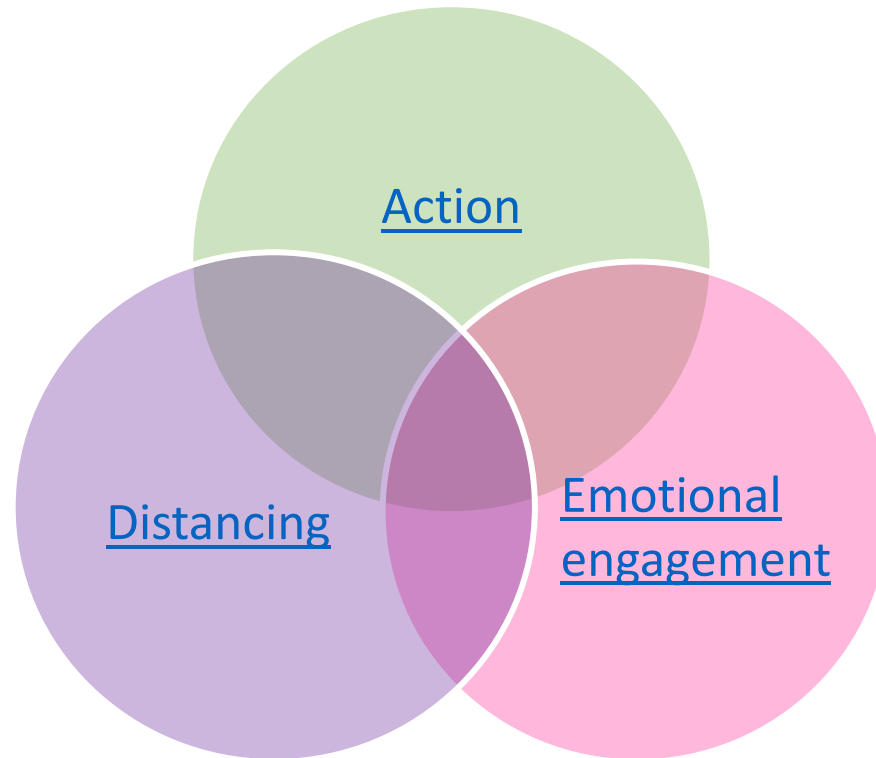


'Self-Management of Long-Term Health Conditions', written by Kate Lorig and other authors and published in 2014

What do we mean by action?

Giving oneself rest from grief and rest from action:

- Rest and relaxation
- Self-care
- Work and other commitments
- Distraction



Things we can do to directly tackle the crisis:

- Personal
- Political
- Practical

Finding ways to process our emotions around what's happening.

Whichever tasks, from any area, that will help us cope and adjust.

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?

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 matters to *you*.

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.

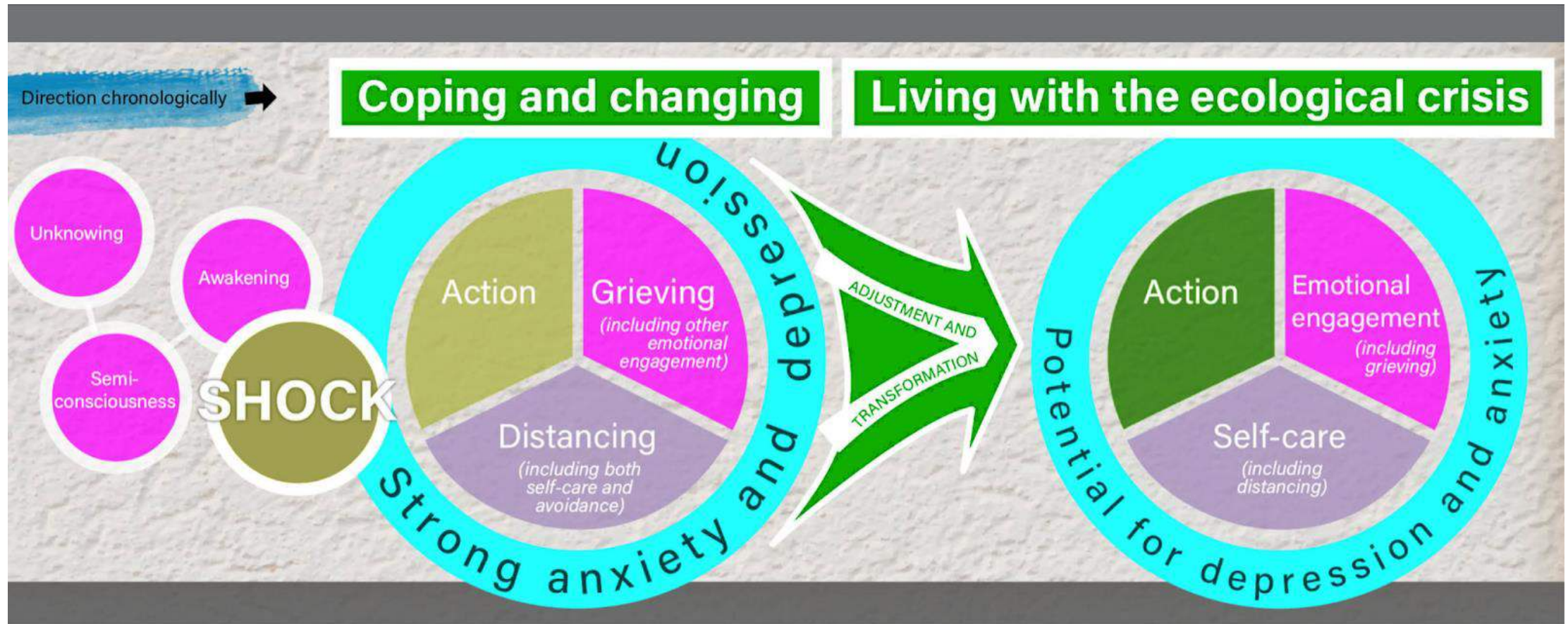
Action plans

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: what, when, where, how much, how often.
5. Write out your plan and keep it somewhere visible.

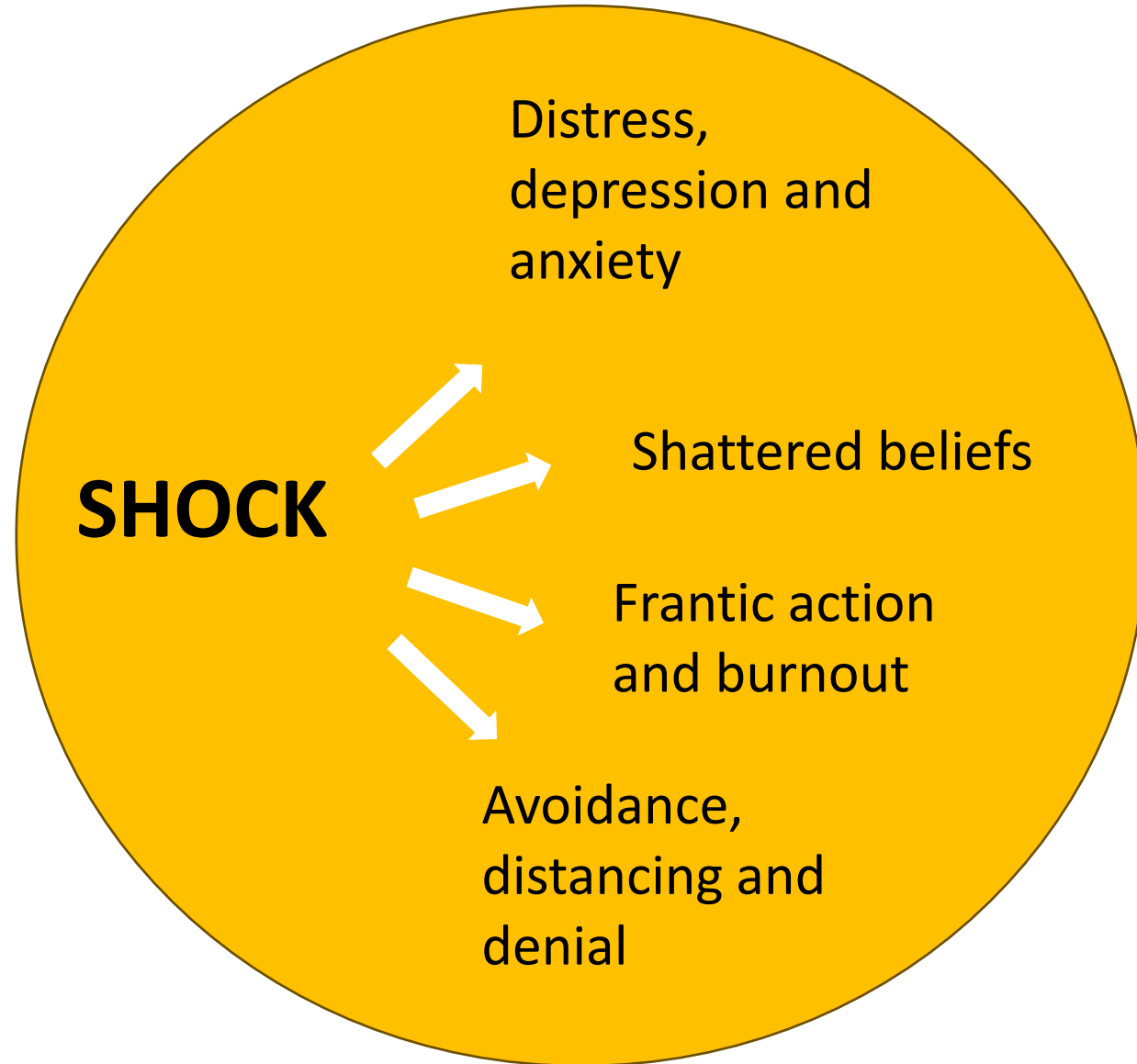
Example:

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.

The Process of Eco-Anxiety and Ecological Grief



Shock

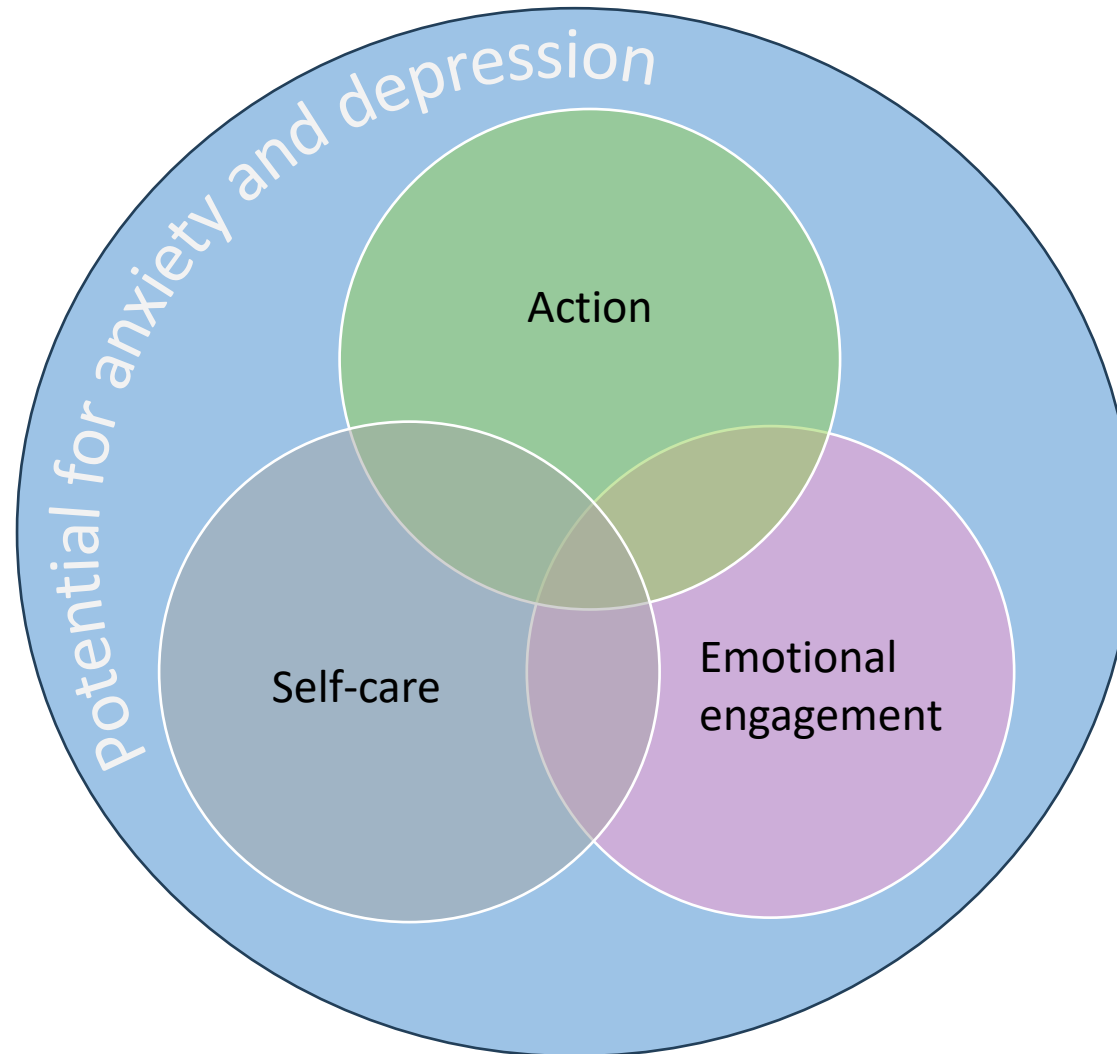


[Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala 'Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief'](#)

[← Back to process diagram](#)

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](#)

Emotional engagement

Surprise

Shock

Anger and moral outrage

Sadness and grief

Depression

Guilt

Tolerating distressing emotions: why and how?



Caring

Inspiration

Hope

Pleasure

Belonging

Envy and admiration

Fear and anxiety

Hostile emotions

Climate Emotions Wheel

Action to tackle the causes of the climate and ecological crisis

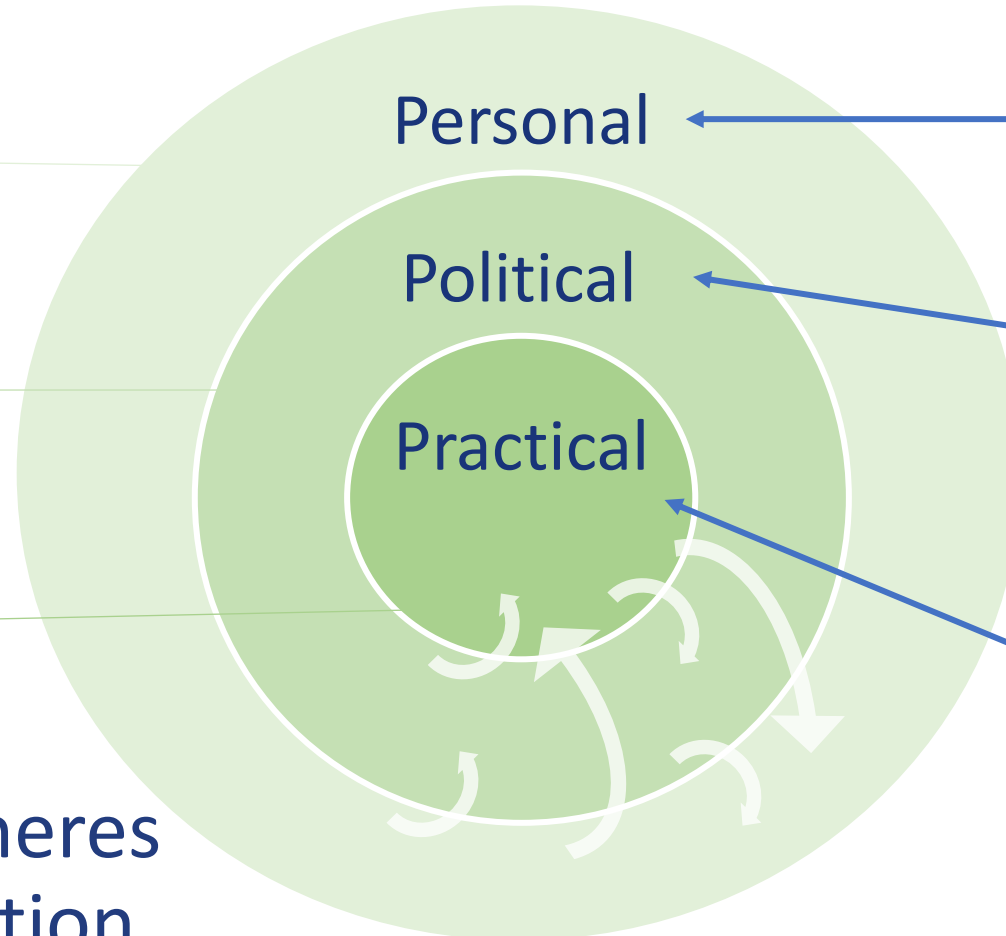
What?

Beliefs and values

Systems and structures

Technological and behavioural solutions

The Three Spheres of Transformation



How?

- Reflection
- Questioning

- Social movements
- Lobbying
- Interest groups
- Social innovation

- Actions
- Interventions
- Strategies
- Behaviour change
- Practices

[← process diagram](#)

[→ conversation](#)

Self-care and distancing

Rest	Soothing	Denial
Relaxation	Self-care and community care	Distraction

[←
coping & changing](#)

[←
process diagram](#)

[→
conversation](#)