



**extinction
rebellion**

Action wellbeing training

Introduction

Meeting Reminders

- Technical: language - question - agree/support - temperature check
- Zero tolerance for any form of discrimination. Please do point it out when it occurs
- Acknowledge that we are all here with our own background - use NVC in your communication
- We welcome everyone and every part of everyone
- We acknowledge that there are other struggles and we stand in solidarity with other movements
- Make room for others - everyone's opinion is equally valuable.
- Please do speak out about your concerns and worries
- Pronoun you prefer (she/her, he/him, they/them, ..)

An XR action is a place where a lot of different emotions might arise: Joy about being together, stress about how the action itself is going, fear of how bystanders might react, anger or sadness coming from discussions with fellow rebels about the state of the world, frustration about how everything is going and the sheer exhilaration of feeling things finally move.

Part of the task of wellbeing is creating space for all these emotions and help people to contain them. Next to this important job Wellbeing people help to create an atmosphere where everyone can feel as safe as possible, physically and mentally. One way of doing this is by making sure everyone knows what to expect and what is expected of them during the action.

This training will provide some ideas and techniques on how to do all of these things. How do we listen to a rebel who is feeling depressed about the climate? How do we address rebels who aren't adhering to the action consensus? How do we keep calm, *really* calm during a tense situation? How do we de-escalate a conflict?

What is most important is self care. When you fly in an airplane they explain to you to put on your oxygen mask first before you tend to others. It is like that in action as well. Whenever you are in a state where you feel some calmness, some strength, some open heartedness, you will invite others to meet that. We all feel each other and therefore we can invite others to calm down if we sense some calmness ourselves.

The most important thing however, is to be kind, firm and there. And just by being at this training, you've already shown you can do those things.

Check-in

Facilitate and do a check-in before you start the training here.

General info Check in

Here's how to guide a check-in step by step:

1. Give a little explanation about the why of the Check in and what people can expect.

You can use this information as a source of inspiration:

Before every action or meeting we start with a check-in. It's a technique that focuses on the body, because through the body you become aware of the here and now and of your emotions, of your wants and needs, of your resources. This helps to get more in touch with yourself, to be more in the heart and the body instead of being stuck in the mind. It might help you to take care of yourself in the here and now. Doing this together and sharing our experiences enables the group to become a group, it enables the sense of safety, connection and solidarity.

2. Instruct everyone to sit or stand in a relaxed way and suggest that they close their eyes if they feel comfortable to do so. People can also choose a point on the ground to let their eyes rest on.

3. Instruct everyone to keep silent and take a few deep breaths while focusing on their breath. Make the example, so breath deep and calm and see if you can let the sounds of your breath be hearable. This will invite the others.

Examples of things you can become aware of during a check in are tension, nervousness, heaviness, anxiety, pressure, lightness, enthusiasm, courage, insecurity or sadness. Sometimes it can be surprising what you feel when you turn the attention inside. This is because we are so used to having our attention outside. See if you can scan your inner world with curiosity, ask yourself, how is it in me in this moment? Allow yourself to just feel whatever you feel without judgement. No right, no wrong, just observing yourself with a fresh kindness, how am I now? Recognize the fact that feelings change all the time, they simply come and go. What remains is you. That what is aware of it all.

4. Instruct everyone to scan their body with their attention, from the inside out. You can guide a body scan from the top down or downwards up. Top down is usually more easy for people because the attention is more in the upper regions of the body so it is easier to connect with. Then moving down brings grounding. You can name different body parts. While guiding: use questions rather than statements. This will support an exploring orientation, statements (like: feel your head or breath) might bring out a defensive orientation which is less opening and welcoming.

- If you bring your attention into your head, how is it there?
- How is it in the space around your eyes, behind your eyes? Usually this is a place where some tension is stored. If so see if you can let your eyes fall a bit more into your head, give them a bit of rest.
- How is it in your jaws, are they loose or do you sense some holding? If you do, see if you can move them a bit while you take some deep breaths.
- How is it in your neck and your shoulders? Are they relaxed, resting or are they tight?
- How is it in your arms? Can you sense that they are hanging on your shoulders, do you sense the weight? What's the temperature? How is it in your hands? You might feel some tingling, some streaming, so muscle tension, let it be.
- Move up with your attention and check how is it in your throat, your chest? How is breathing happening at this moment? Can you breath deep and freely, do you sense how your belly is moving when you breath, do you sense that your chest is moving when you breath? Is there somewhere where you sense some tightness

or contracting? That's all welcome. See if with every outbreath you can let yourself be supported by the chair/couch/ground a bit more, see if you can allow yourself to sink into the chair/couch/ground. The ground is holding you, earth is holding you now.

- An inbreath is an active movement, your breathing muscles tighten. It is a movement meant for getting what you need, oxygen. So with every breath in you are filling yourself with energy, it is a movement upwards. An outbreath is a relaxing movement, your muscles let go. With an outbreath you give back to earth what you don't longer need. It is a movement downwards. This cycle of activation and relaxation is happening all the time.
- Then move a bit lower with your attention and tune into your lower back, your pelvic area, see if you can sense that this is holding your upper body. Can you sense the weight of that?
- Then move into your legs if you can, how is it there? What's the temperature? Again, you might feel some tingling, some streaming, so muscle tension, some lightness or heaviness, all is welcome.
- Then drop a bit more and sense your feet. Can you sense the length of them (and you might want to gently move your feet in order to check that, so roll from the heel to the toes and back or if standing: replace your weight from the back to the front of your feet and back until you find a middle)? Can you sense the width of them (and you might want to move your feet again so roll from inside to the outside)? Can you sense where your feet are touching the ground, the earth? What do you notice when you sense the inside of your feet?
- Now see if you can feel your body as a whole? What does the body feel like at the moment? Anything specific that they notice at this moment? What does their body try to tell you? Does it feel tense, light, lively, stuck, heavy?
- Are there any feelings/emotions that you become aware of? If so, see if there is a bit of space in you for them to be there.

When you guide a body scan you can choose to be as extensive or as brief as time allows or you like. Especially during actions you might be limited in time.

5. If you feel comfortable in sharing your experience with the group you are welcome. You can also choose to make a round and let everybody share something. If you are short in time or with a lot of people you can also choose to share in smaller sub-circles. There are pros and cons for both methods so choose what you prefer. It can help to start sharing yourself and share something vulnerable to make this easier for others. Questions to ask for a check in:

- Let each person that wants to share what they experienced or noticed

- or their intention for being there. You can also ask if there is something they might need from the group.
- The experience is that this helps to feel connected to others and creates a feeling of safety. Feelings can also change right after you have spoken.
- Let them also share why they are joining the action
- what they are grateful for in the here and now to also get the attention on positive things available.

Note: The check-in is just for sharing, it's important that everyone else just listens to the person sharing without reacting to it.

Note: During check-ins people might not always want to share with the group, so let people know that you will be available afterwards to talk if they so please.

How to guide a Check-in

After guiding the check-in yourself, you go through the step by step process for attendees of the training.

Program for the training:

- Introduction
- Check-in
- General role of wellbeing in XR
- The different wellbeing roles during actions
- Non-violent communication: empathy listening skills
- Pauze?
- De escalation with Non violent communication
- Arrestability and chaos: dit na de rollen doen ipv beginnen met stress?
- Exercises and techniques for when you provide wellbeing
- How to guide a check-out
- Debrief

General role of wellbeing in XR

Question to the group: What do you think about when talking about well-being? What would well-being look like during an action?

A sum up of examples of things we focus on (during actions):

- Guide check ins
- Creating feelings of connection and belonging, making people feel welcome and seen during actions.
- Provide a safe-space for people dealing with intense emotions
- Keep an eye on everybody taking care of their basic needs drink/eat/body temperature/rest.
- Support when people get physically hurt or feel unwell during the action (First aid).
- Provide exercises that relax the body and mind and teach people how to take care of themselves and each other
- Inform people about the action consensus and make sure they live by it during the action (no drugs and alcohol-use for example)
- De-escalation when needed on site (with the help of Non Violent Communication)
- Safety (traffic) / Safeguarding (vulnerable people).
- Guide check outs

You could say wellbeing forms the bedrock of the actions and of Extinction Rebellion.

Before we go through the specific roles we will practice “Breath, slowdown, support” now.

1. Breathe, Slow Down, Support

This technique can help you to feel more safe, calm and connected. It is very useful to do before a shift or before you approach a stressful situation. It also helps during and after stressful situations, to release tension and feel more grounded. You can use it by yourself, with your affinity group or any other group or individual that seems to need it. In case of doing this in a group, you get the group members closely together in a hub and tell them step by step what to do.

Don't go into a situation on a wave of adrenaline. Focus and center yourself first. Whatever is happening, it can wait 10 seconds.

Shake out tension before you begin, shaking literally let the body release physical tension. Shake your arms, shake your legs one by one, make sounds because that is a great way of releasing stored tension. You can also jump a couple of times if that feels appropriate. Now also move your neck, head, move your face, you can massage your face with your hands. If you dare, make really funny and ugly face gestures, you can

also include your tongue. Now here's a challenge, do you dare to even show others your funny faces? If not no problem, respect your boundaries (rebel agreement).

Breath Stand or sit still and bring your attention inside your body. Calming down happens by focusing on exhaling and lengthening this. Take a couple of deep breaths and focus on the outbreath. Listen to how your body responds to this. Breathing in is a movement of action, breathing out is movement of relaxation. This cycle is happening all the time, becoming aware of this dynamic in the present moment allows you to influence your breathing rhythm and therefore it is a great tool for resourcing. You can support this by asking yourself: what changes when you lengthen and focus on breathing out, when you focus on letting go, on relaxing?

Slow down.

- Focussing on your breathing helps you to slow down and get out of your mind and emotions and into the here and now through the body.
- Grounding: If you want to slow down even more you can do a visualisation. While you keep on focussing on breathing out, which is a movement downwards, see if you can sense down all the way into your feet. Connect to the Earth. Now see if you can visualize roots extending under feet. It starts with some small branches and just give them some time to grow. Give them time to find their way into the earth and see how you can support that with your breath. Maybe the branches that are there will start growing new branches, let the image unfold and notice what is happening in your body as a response. You might start to feel a bit more rooted, more grounded. You might feel more connected to the earth. Notice how the ground (or chair) is meeting your feet (or legs and bum). Feel your feet as if that's all there is to do. Keep on breathing towards your feet slowly and repeat this a few times.
- Notice your feelings and name them (e.g. I feel the tension in my arms, I have some fear, I'm wanting this to go well...')

Support. Now see if you can become aware of the **sources of support surrounding you**. When we are in stress we do not have an eye for the things supporting us and bringing us safety. And even though we might not have an eye for them, they actually are there. What in your immediate environment is a source of support right now? That can be anything that brings a sense of comfort, a sense of relaxation. It can be your buddy, affinity group, a reassuring item of clothing, a colour in the crowd, trees or plants nearby, it can be the ground which is always there. Sense how your body is being informed when you find something that brings a sense of comfort. Take time to really let this information get back into your body. Say out loud what your sources of support are.

2. Exercise about calming down through support

Intention: bringing awareness to how the body feels when there is access to support. Usually this is calming the nervous system. When you make this experience in a conscious way, you might realise the value of support and therefore you might reach for it when you get stressed.

Make groups of 2 or 3. One is tracking, one is questioning, if you work in groups of 3, one is observing.

Timeframe: 2 or 3 rounds of 10 min (you can extend the first round, it brings a deeper settling if there is more time. Yet this choice depends on the time there is).

- 5 min for the tracker to answer the question: **What are sources of support for you? What helps you to settle, calm down and feel more connected to yourself and others?**

Think of: certain people, places, memories, animals, activities (like yoga, sports, meditation, dancing, singing, arts), music, or other things?

The questioner is repeating the same question every time the tracker is silent for some time. (Silence is needed to find the answers yet if the silence takes a long time it might help to repeat the question).

Observer and questioner: look for signs in the tracker from which you can tell that the person who is tracking is settling, is calming down. Look for: breath slowing down or deepening, more relaxed face, smiling and positive emotions, lowering of the voice, slowing down in speaking etc.

- 2 min for the tracker to answer the question: **The body is always listening to what is spoken. How does your body respond during answering?**
- 3 min in which the questioner and the observer share what they noticed in the tracker of body signs that pointed to settling.

Switch roles so everyone gets a chance. Collect experiences from the group all together.

If you feel like it give your body some movement, see how it would like to move, it might be a good shake, it might be some stretching. The shaking things out you can always use also on it's own.

Note: It really helps to practice this technique daily during your normal routines. In this way it is much easier to bring it into practice in stressful situations cause your system is already used to it. The practice becomes much easier this way.

Specific roles in Wellbeing

Wellbeing person in affinity group

What they do:

Every affinity group should have at least one person (preferably two) that provides well-being for the group. They fill in the same role as the general well-being team members but specifically for their group. People generally find it easier to talk to people to whom they have affinity.

Furthermore the well-being person in the group will arrange check-ins during the action(s) and afterwards to help the group manage their feelings.

Preferably these people have followed at least a wellbeing training and can also take up the role of general well-being. The wellbeing person in the group can also (help) setup a debrief after the action(s) if needed.

Note: They don't have to wear special **vests**.

Action wellbeing team members

What they do:

They support and in general take care of physical and emotional wellbeing and the overall atmosphere. Here is a picture of what it could look like.

“One of the general wellbeing persons hands out cookies, and water. Another one walks around sees a lonely or stressed rebel and asks: “How are you doing?” then listens actively and empathically. Two other wellbeing team members address a rebel who carries a sign of a political party/smoking a joint or drinking alcohol. They calmly and nicely explain that we have an action consensus in which we decided these should not be part of the action and ask the rebel to put it away. It's nice to also check on people coordinating every once in a while and offer support when they seem stressed.

Explain that if you do well being in a blockade you are basically functioning as a battle nurse, which is intense and very fulfilling at the same time. Having a focus of providing support might help you surf the stress levels of being in a blockade in an very effective way, yet it can be challenging because you might be in need of support yourself.

Therefore you work in pairs ??????.

Note: They wear special **vests**. They do **not carry signs or banners**.

Note 2:The practice of 'Breath, Slowdown and Support', that will be explained next can help you stay calm and present in this and other roles.

Now we continue with the explanation of some other roles.

Stewards

What they do:

They ensure that the rebels in the action are safe from traffic. They inform traffic-users about the action and de-escalate when people are angry because of the action. You will learn how to properly do this in this training.

Besides taking care of people stuck in traffic, stewards also actively engage and seek contact with passersby who might have questions to explain what we are doing and why we are doing it.

Note: Officially stewards and other wellbeing persons do not take part in the action as an activist. This makes the functions generally low-risk. This is why they **don't wear banners/flags/XR signs**. You will wear a recognizable **vest** during the shift.

3. Empathy Listening skills

The Empathy listening skills will help you to give compassionate attention to people who are lonely, vulnerable or sad. It's important to leave room for emotions and grief without giving a message in any way the feelings are not welcome. Empathetic listening is guessing together instead of knowing how things are. Sounds simple but in practice it turns out to be very difficult for most people. We are so used to reacting in different ways!

Let's start with things we tend to do when someone is upset instead of empathic listening.

- Giving advice: "I think you should..."
- Fix it, solve it: "What will help is..."
- Consolation: "Oh don't worry, it'll get better soon..."
- Judge: "How wrong of you..."
- Showing pity: "Oh you're such a poor thing. Whatever will you do?"
- Showing sympathy and take over the conversation: "I know exactly how you feel... I had exactly the same recently when bla bla bla"

This kinds of reactions can go really automatic and are often well meant but not as helpful as you hope in practice.

Things that do help people is having space to go through their own experience and feel supported. We do this through some specific techniques:

- The speaker takes the lead, the listener does not interrupt or lead the conversation for them. Be curious to understand where they are at. Keep the focus on the speaker, listening fully without filling in
- Connect with another human in the present moment, without losing oneself. See if you can keep some of your attention in your own body while listening to the other.
- Watch your own body language: having your arms crossed over your chest is more closed and less inviting than having an open posture, relaxing your face is inviting
- Ask questions that come from a place of curiosity in you, so if something is not clear for you you can ask for some more words so that you can understand.
- Mirror/reflect back what you heard and understand from what they share. "I hear you say that.... (repeat in your own words)"
- Acknowledge, feel compassion for their feelings and needs (longings, intentions). "I understand that that is challenging for you. I might feel the same if I was in your shoes and I can imagine having a need for contact in that situation."
- Check if you understood well. Always leave space for the other to react and disagree. "If I repeat what you said like this, do I understand you correctly?"
- Silence. Space. Pause. See what else comes from the other person.
- Trust that they know best how to move forward
- Know that this is very often "help enough". You don't have to solve or fix it.

Exercise

Try it in pairs: One person speaks about 5 minutes what he/she has on his/her mind or heart, the other one listens actively. Afterwards: collect/share the experiences, so ask the group: what did you find out together? What worked well, what did not?

-- Temperature check for a break --

First Aid People

What they do:

First Aid when needed

--Only sign up for this role if **you are a BHV-er or first aider** already.--

Note: First Aid people like other non-arrestables have **no banners, XR-signals** etc. You will wear a special **vest**.

Arrestee support coordinators

What they do:

They come in action when rebels will be arrested. The police liaison who is at the actionsite, will call them with the information on arrests. The arrestee coordinators have an overview and send arrestee support people to the right police stations that the arrestees are in. They will be informed when arrestees are released and make sure everybody is checked upon after the action.

Note: There will be separate workshops for this specific role.

Arrestee support team members

What they do:

They will welcome arrestees when they are released. They do *not* go into the police station to ask about the arrestees, and they do *not* give their names to the police. They welcome and thank ex-arrestees when they come out, ask how they are and give them something to eat/drink something warm to wear or a hug when needed.

Following this, they will immediately contact the arrestee support coordinator (via a Signal group). If the ex-arrestee has an AG, arrestee support coordination will arrange that one of the AG members will come and pick them up. If they do not have an AG we can offer them help to get to the rebel base(?) where they can rest and recover with other rebels.

Inspiration: Breathing through by Joanna Macy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qUTIYCzYo4>

Different written meditations

<https://workthatreconnects.org/resource-type/meditation/>

4. De-escalation with non-violent communication

See: [NVC De-Escalation Handbook](#)

The following process you can use when someone acts with anger or frustration.

1. **Breathe.** Slow Down. Support. Don't go into a situation on a wave of adrenaline. Focus and center yourself first. Whatever is happening, it can wait 10 seconds.
2. **Remember their humanity.** A commitment to non violence begins from the premises that all of us matter. It recognises that we are all similar. So, imagine yourself as being a policeman or a frustrated bystander. Get to a place where you're actually having a conversation with the person. You might do this by distracting them by guiding the conversation to a less confrontational topic: "I really have to get to work and you're in the way", "Oh, what do you do?". Do this with genuine interest. This will help the person to calm down. Once the person has calmed down, you can bring it back to the subject at hand.
3. **Empathy** is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position. Practice **empathic listening** by
 - a. **Reflecting not reacting:** "I'm hearing that you're really frustrated and would just like to get to work."
 - b. **Feelings before facts:** Guessing what is important in the other: I'm guessing that you're tired and could really do with some ease right now...." Check if your interpretation is correct for the other.
 - c. Valuing **connection over correction.** It is more important (for them *and* the climate movement) that the person leave with a good feeling than you 'winning' the argument. No one has even been convinced by anyone else. People convince themselves and they do it slowly. You can help them to do that, but you shouldn't force it.
 - d. Avoid the word but: "I see your perspective but..."
4. **Ask** before you give your perspective - Is the other person ready to hear your perspective? Ask explicit **consent** if you want to give our perspective: "Would you like to hear why we are here?"
5. Debrief: **Breathe.** Slow Down. Support

Note: If you feel things are getting too much emotional for you. Step back and let another wellbeing person take over. Always take care of your own boundaries. It's not a weakness it is a strength.

Practice

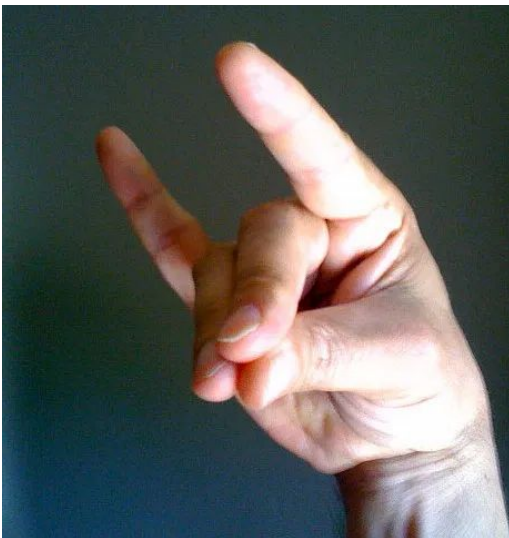
Try it in pairs. An angry person on a bicycle who cannot go through the blockade and has a job interview.

5. De-escalation techniques in large crowds

When we encounter someone inside the action who is becoming too aggressive for one buddy pair to handle, there are a few things we can try to defuse and de-escalate the situation. Our goal here is to calm that person or group down to a place where they can either be talked to again by someone one on one, or to make them leave the action site.

The first, and most difficult thing to do is to either gather a crowd around you of people willing to follow your lead in what comes next. Once you have that, you can try the following techniques, starting with the first one and then going to the next one if that doesn't work:

- 1. Silence:** Using the silent giraffe, ask for silence from the people around the person in distress. Just having the crowd be very quiet around them might already allow them to find more calm inside themselves. It's very difficult to stay loud when everyone else around you is silent.



- 2. Sit down around the person:** Ask everyone to sit down around the person, but (very important!) *allow them a corridor out of the situation* so they don't feel trapped. It can feel very strange to all of a sudden have this happen around you,

and might make them snap out of what is happening and use the corridor to get out of the situation.

- 3. Put out your hand in a stop signal and start humming.** If everyone around the person starts doing this, it will feel even more like they are the odd one out.



- 4. If nothing works and the person remains aggressive, ask for help from the police.** Although we want to avoid this, and we do not believe in the form of justice the police provides, there are times we don't have the capacity to help someone and we are forced to choose between the right thing and the safety of others in the action. This is something we then have to mourn together, as it hurts us to have it come this far.

If the person is able to calm down, try again to talk to them using the BREATHE technique above.

When this is over, don't forget to provide a checkout for the people involved in what just happened. Depending on what exactly happened, they might be rattled by participating in it.

Arrestability

In the past we have talked about 'arrestable' and 'non-arrestable' roles. We want to stress very clearly that although the risk of arrest will very likely be low for people who do well-being, we can not guarantee anything about what the police might do.

Therefore, we use the terms 'low-risk' and 'high-risk' now when talking about the different roles within XR and specifically wellbeing in this training.

From our experience and from what we've been told by other movements, the police will likely very clearly announce that they will start arresting people if they do not leave the area within a certain timeframe. When this happens, it is you and your affinity group's responsibility to decide what to do.

We also want to stress that it is OK, normal and not a bad thing to not want to be arrested. We do not make arrestees into heroes, and we do not shame people for not wanting to sit in a jail cell or risk legal repercussions. We try to allow people to make as conscious a decision as possible about the risks they want to take, but we cannot guarantee anything.

A note on chaos

Actions go exactly as planned until... they don't! :) It's important to be mentally prepared for this. There will be chaos from time to time! It's part of a big action such as Rebellion Week. Because there are so many people working on it, it becomes almost impossible to communicate things in a perfect way. Apart from that so many things are depending on partly unpredictable factors and there are so many parameters of influence on how things will go! And being a non-hierarchical movement (which is great!) also brings its own difficulties into the picture. Remember we will get through one way or another, everybody is doing their best and we learn by doing.

It can also help to remember our task as wellbeing people is not to decide on what should or should not happen with the action itself. That is the task of Action & Logistics and the International Rebellion Circle. What we can do is make sure that everyone is as safe, calm and comfortable as possible in the situation. When everyone else starts getting nervous, we should stay calm and try to get others calm again as well. A panicking brain is not known to make the best decisions :) It might be useful to think in terms of **'attaching yourself to the people doing the action instead of the action itself'**.

Note: Our role of calming people down can be especially useful for people who are coordinating during an action. Be an anchor for them! Provide support. Things like trying to make them see that even if one part of the action is not working the way we thought that doesn't mean that everything will fall apart can really help. Also check if they have been drinking and eating enough and offering some can be really appreciated cause they might not have time to arrange this themselves.

6. Exercise about stress

Intention: bringing awareness to how the body feels when it gets stressed. When you make this experience in a conscious way, you might be able to notice it more clearly and remember to use stress regulation techniques to calm down again.

Make groups of 2 or 3. One is tracking, one is questioning, if you work in groups of 3, one is observing.

Timeframe: 2 or 3 rounds of 10 min (you can extend the first round, it brings a deeper settling if there is more time. Yet this choice depends on the time there is).

- 5 min (or more) for the tracker to answer the question: **How do you respond when you get stressed? What do other people see when you get stressed?** The questioner is repeating the same question every time the tracker is silent for some time. (Silence is needed to find the answers yet if the silence takes a long time it might help to repeat the question).
Observer and questioner: look for signs in the tracker from which you can tell that the person who is tracking is getting stressed. Look for: breath fastening or more in the chest instead of belly, facial expression, challenging emotions, level of the voice, speeding up in speaking etc.
- 2 min for the tracker to answer the question: **The body is always listening to what is spoken. How does your body respond during answering?**
- 3 min in which the questioner and the observer share what they noticed in the tracker of body signs that pointed to settling.

Switch roles so everyone gets a chance.

Collect experiences. Ask the group: how was this, what did you find out?

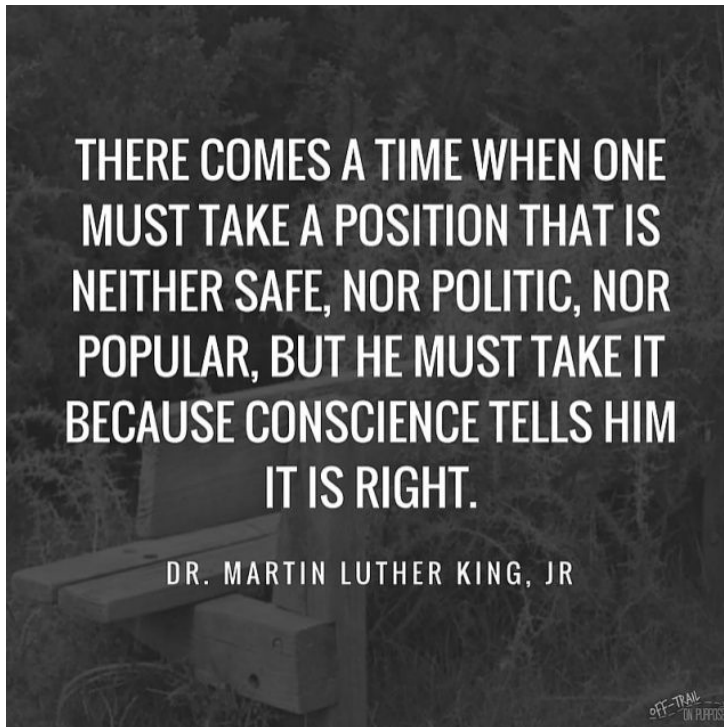
7. Calming exercises

Other calming techniques that you can use for yourself or for people in action that are stressed:

- One of the best ways to get back into a more regulated state is through social engagement and connection. If you feel stressed, anxious, angry, lonely, see if you can find the braveness to reach out and ask for support. If you see someone looking emotionally troubled, upset, see if you can offer some support to them.
- Name it to tame it. This is a mindfulness technique which can help to get a bit of distance between yourself and your experience. You can also support someone else in naming and taming it. The first step is to label the emotion. "I feel worried." Once the emotion is labeled, you can then focus on the sensations that accompany that emotion. "My body feels tensed". Then just register what that brings.



- Watch your breath, exhale longer than you inhale, breath into your belly.
- When highly stressed, stamping on the floor can bring more grounding, more feeling connected to earth again. It brings the action energy more downwards so it is easier to contain. Take some deep breaths while you do this.
- Remember why you are here and why you are doing what you are doing.



For actions where we work with swarms (7 minute road blocking technique) there is an instruction available here [Decision making during swarming.](#)

Roleplay?

Debrief circle, a week after the action

Is to emotionally process what we have experienced in the action. There are different ways to facilitate this. You can share in small groups, you can do it centralised while using a 'talking stick'. Who has the stick, speaks.

1. The facilitator explains why the debrief is, what will happen in the circle, and gives the meeting reminders.

2. Start with a round of names and pronouns.
3. Initiate a moment of silence, asks participants to go inside, experience their body, emotions, and what they are with at that moment.
4. Each participant who wants, shares her/his own experience from their heart. Everyone listens in silence with empathy and compassion (no discussion, no feedback, no advice). When a participant speaks very, very long and from her/his head, the facilitator asks to put the stick at the heart, and asks the participant, what he or she still has to share.
5. End with a round of gratitude: 'What are you grateful for in your life?'

For both debriefs.

- Tensions and conflicts are unavoidable. They are a part of XR. Reflect on how to deal with them. Consider a restorative circle. Or mediation. Do not let them go underground or go wild. If you don't make it to work it out yourselves, know that within XR there are people who can support conflict mediation or with stress regulation. If your affinity group was in a high stress action and there was violence happening, please consider to ask a professional to guide a debrief together with you so stress can be discharged and emotions can be addressed. This will support the regenerative capacity of each rebel. You can contact them through a regen representative or facilitator on MM or signal.
- If there was a lot of stress it might be best to not do a debrief in the first days after the action from a trauma perspective. it's better NOT to do a plenary debriefing in the first days after the event. This might worsen reactions and cause feelings of guilt or shame. If people feel the need to talk about the event, it's better to do this in personal conversations.
- We react to (police) violence, repression or other high-stress events. It's not only normal, but also a fact. Don't contribute to macho group cultures where dealing with these reactions seems to be a taboo. It's not beneficial for anyone: not on a personal level, not for the people around us, not for the political movement in general. Care for ourselves and each other should be taken seriously.

How to guide a check out

The check-out is practically the same process as the check in. Except for the fact it is done when you end a day or a shift. It's meant to process and share the emotions you had during your shift/action day before you continue with something else. A Check out takes about 15 to 20 minutes in general. Explicitly tell the participants that all feelings

are welcome. Also feelings like disappointment or frustration which is hard to express for some people.

1. Start with a good shake!
2. Give a little explanation about the why of the Check-out
3. Instruct everyone to sit or stand in a relaxed way and suggest that they close their eyes.
4. Instruct everyone to keep silent and take a few deep breaths while focusing on their breath.
5. Instruct everyone to scan their body with their attention. What does the body feel like in the moment? Anything specific that they notice in this moment? What does their body try to tell them? Does it feel tense, light, lively, stuck, heavy, are there feelings/emotions they get aware of? Go through the day/shift in your mind and see if emotions come up while doing so.
6. Let each person that wants to share something about what they experienced emotionally during the shift/day or noticed in the here and now. Is there something they might need from the group or in any other way right now? You can also choose to make a round and let everybody share something. There are pro's and cons for both methods so choose what you prefer. It can help to start sharing yourself and share something vulnerable to make this easier for others.
7. End with a sharing of what they are grateful for in the here and now to also get the attention on positive things available.
8. Stay on a bit. We noticed in previous actions that sometimes rebels do not want to 'spoil' the atmosphere by telling what has upset them. And sometimes experiences are too vulnerable to share. Tell them that you will stay a while so they still can talk to you. And give your phone number (if you want).

Note: Just like the check-in, the check-out is just for sharing. It's important that everyone else just listens to the person sharing without reacting to it. Make sure you are in the most quiet and peaceful spot available at that moment.

END OF REGULAR TRAINING

Quick look up for what to do in specific situations:

What to do In case of.... rebels not feeling well

- Minor injuries: call over a first aider
- Serious injuries: call an ambulance
- Someone feeling overwhelmed/seems distressed: take aside to sit down, offer water/reassurance/to call a friend/family if needed
- Someone feeling unwell and needing to leave the action: ensure they have assistance/company- either a friend or trusted wellbeing person, do NOT send them off with someone unknown, or on their own.

In case of....rebels not adhering to our action consensus

Examples are: Violent or aggressive behaviour, intoxication, shaming and blaming others, promoting things that are not in line with the purpose of the action.

Take the following things in mind:

- Address them with two wellbeing persons, not alone
- Calm yourself first (Breath, Slow down, Support, see below)
- Leave space between you and the person(s)
- Speak soft and slow
- Do not make prolonged eye contact

What to say/do:

- Introduce yourself.
- Express why you would like to have a talk with them.
- Explain your concern
- Give them space to talk and listen to them, be curious about their feelings and try to understand where they are at.
- Explain what you would like them to change/do and tell about our Action Consensus and why it's important to keep to these agreements
- Ask them to leave in a friendly way if they do not want to adhere to them

TOOLKIT (FOR LOCAL GROUPS):

1. How to organize wellbeing in an action

Timeframe and tasks

1. A month or three weeks before the action:

- Start finding rebels who will take on wellbeing roles. Sign them up, send them a mail or a welcome message.
- Start with setting up Arrestee Support if it is an arrestable action, also, find a backoffice for them,

2. Two weeks before the action:

- Choose who will be the wellbeing coordinator on the day of the action
- Get the First Aid Kits and the colored vests.

3. A week before the action:

- Check out the site of the action,
- Determine the location for the brief and debrief.
- If you organize a demonstration, walk the route with the stewards.

4. Two days before the action:

- Wellbeing coordinator makes signal group, sends information about the action, about the tasks and where and when to meet on the day of the action of the for the briefing.

5. An hour before the action:

- The wellbeing coordinator briefs the team.

6. Right after the action:

- Facilitate a debrief in groups of 10 to 15 people (if possible), facilitated by members of the wellbeing team.

6. A week or two weeks after the action:

- Organize a debrief

7. Two weeks after the action:

Start calling ex-arrestees.

Start with your local regenerative circle a month or three weeks before the action, to ask people in your local group if they want to take part in wellbeing. Put it out on Mattermost, ask rebels you know directly if they want to do it and post your question in the national wellbeing and regenerative culture channel. When rebels want to do it, write down their names and welcome them! You also need some coloured vests. Each role wears a vest in a certain colour (see below.) There is a list of materials and where what is, you can find that on Mattermost, for instance in one of the pinned posts in the Regenerative Culture Channel. Find vests! Of course you can start later with the vests, but sometimes they are hard to find. Just like wellbeing people! It takes a while before they sign up. But often they just show up on the itself. How many wellbeing people do you need in the action and what are their tasks?

In an action of XR **wellbeing team members** care for physical and emotional wellbeing of rebels who take part in the action. Below, more about their tasks. They work in pairs, you need at least two of them. Often you need more. In the UK XR, they count on 1 team member for 100 rebels. In the Netherlands we have 1 for 50, sometimes even 1 for 25. In swarming, the action is in groups, then you need two wellbeing persons for each swarm group. Wellbeing team members wear a green vest.

First Aiders help with minor injuries. You need two of them with First Aid Kits. They wear a special vest.

A **police liaison** communicates with the police. There is one person who has this job. It is not always a task of wellbeing, but sometimes it is. Wears a special vest.

Stewards ensure safety. They keep the group together in case of a demonstration and help with crossings. It depends on the action if you need them. You do not need stewards in every action. They wear a special vest.

A **wellbeing coordinator** oversees the action at the site and ensures that wellbeing is able to take up the task.

1. Coordinator has the names and numbers of the wellbeing people and forms a Signal Group or Whatsapp Group with them.
2. One or two days before the action the coordinator contacts the wellbeing people to tell them what the action is about, what their task is what to take with them (water maybe). The coordinator also tells them the time and place where to meet for the wellbeing briefing before the action.
3. One hour or half an hour before the action, the wellbeing is briefed by the wellbeing coordinator on a safe place near the site of the action. This starts with a round of

names, a check in, an explanation of the action, followed by the tasks of wellbeing the action. It is good to mention that wellbeing is about physical and emotional wellbeing and that grief of rebels is welcomed.

4. During the action the coordinator sends messages to the wellbeing people if needed.
5. After the action the wellbeing coordinator debriefs the wellbeing people

If it is an arrestable action, you need to set up an an arrestee support team. There will be **arrestee support team members** who wait for ex-arrestees nearby police stations to welcome and thank them. You need **arrestee support coordinators** who organize arrestee support in a back office. They organize also ex-arrestee support.

Right after the action you organize a debrief near the actionsite to start to emotionally process the action. If possible, split the group in little groups for this. You organize a second debrief in one or two weeks. In this training you find elsewhere how to facilitate debriefs. Also, call ex-arrestees how they are doing and if they need support.

2. Overview of Wellbeing Roles

Wellbeing Team Member

- Wears a green vest. Is recognizable.
- Supports the action, does not take part. Does not hold banners or flags.
- Gives physical support: blankets, tarps, biscuits (post adrenaline sugar crash), water, sunscreen.
- Gives emotional support:
 - de-escalates using Non Violent Communication in tense situations;
 - makes room for grief;
 - keeps up spirit by starting chants;
 - calms stressful people;
 - chats with people, stimulates a friendly atmosphere; They ask: *"How are you doing?"*
- Looks after vulnerable people and their well being.
- Takes action when the XR Action Consent gets violated: respect for each other, the public, police and the state; non-violence, physical as well as verbal; we carry no weapons; no alcohol or drugs; each one is accountable for their actions.
- Takes action when any form of racism, -ablism or sexual violence occurs.
- Is in a Whatsapp or Signal group with the wellbeing coordinator at the site.
- Each well being person has a buddy in an action. They look after each other.

Wellbeing team members work in pairs, at least 2. When we swarm, there are in each swarm 2 wellbeing team members.

Steward

- Takes care of safety on the road or site
- Makes sure rebels are safe from traffic, bikes, pedestrians.
- Is in demonstrations before and behind the procession and at the sides, to keep everyone close together and helps crossing at crossroads and streets.
- Has made his/herself familiar with the site of the action. Has walked the route if it is a demonstration, knows the crossings, the dangerous parts.
- De-escalates using Non Violent Communication
- Takes action when the XR Action Consent gets violated: respect for each other, the public, police and the state; non-violence, physical as well as verbal; we carry no

weapons; no alcohol or drugs; each one is accountable for their actions, no signs of political parties.

- Each well being person has a buddy in the action. They look after each other
- Supports the action, does not take part. Does not hold a banner or flag
- Wears yellow vest.

As many as needed, min. 2.

First Aider

- Gives medical support.
- Needs to have a certificate
- Wears orange vest
- Supports the action, does not take part.
- Each well being person has a buddy in the action. They look after each other

Min. 2 First Aiders.

Police Liaison

- Is the only person in the action site who communicates with the police.
- Is go-between, between police and protesters.
- Does not make decisions her/himself.
- Uses Non Violent Direct Action de-escalation techniques in communications.
- Is calm and stable
- Does not take part in the action.
- This role is not always assigned to wellbeing
- Wears green vest.

1 police coordinator, can be paired up with coordinator of Wellbeing. In swarming, each swarm has a police liaison

Coordinator of Wellbeing

- Is on/near site and coordinates well being.
- Wears green vest.

- Makes a Whatsapp or Signal group of all wellbeing in the action.
- Sends wellbeing team members a message beforehand at what place to meet, how late, and information about the action and the tasks of wellbeing.
- Facilitates briefing of wellbeing people before the action: makes sure all wellbeing people in all roles are able to take up their tasks. Briefs them before the action: welcomes them, does a name round and a check in, inspires and explains the action and the tasks of wellbeing in the action.

Important: wellbeing is about physical and emotional support

> explicitly tells wellbeing people that there is room for grief. Because when you are aware of that, rebels feel that.

- Buddies up well-being persons. Makes pairs of experienced and not experienced rebels who keep an eye on each other.
- Sends wellbeing in all roles where they are needed.
- Knows all wellbeing roles in the action and has a clear overview of the action.
- Debriefs wellbeing people at the end of the action.

The briefing of wellbeing is usually done one hour before the action takes place.

Often: half an hour before the action wellbeing team members brief other rebels in little groups.

There is 1 coordinator of wellbeing in an action

Coordinators of Arrestee Support

- Are at back office
- Coordinate arrestee support in a shift
- Have made themselves familiar where the police stations are, to which arrestees will be taken.
- Make sure the personal things of the people who (probably) will be arrested are in a safe place with a sticker with their names on it.
- Brief arrestee support persons who will wait at the stations and will welcome and support arrestees when they are released. They make sure arrestee support people are able to take up their task.
- Are in direct contact with the police liaison at backoffice to know if arrests are made.
- Are in direct contact with lawyers to know to which of the 12 police stations arrestees are taken.

- Write down the names of arrestees and the number of anonymous arrestees
- Send arrestee support to the police stations to which arrestees are taken.
- Make sure that at each police station 1 arrestee support person keeps in contact with them and provides them with the names of the released arrestees.
- Keep track of the names of arrestees who are released.
- Call back the support arrestee people when all arrestees at a station are released.
- Take down names and phone numbers of ex-arrestees for ex-arrestee support, if an ex-arrestee has no objection.

At least 2 coordinators of arrestee support in each arrestable action.

Wellbeing Arrestee Support Team Members

- Welcomes arrestees at the police station when they are released.
- Waits near police station, in sight but not too close..
 - Does not go into the police station to ask when arrestees are released.
 - Does not give names of arrestees to police officers
 - Provides physical support to released arrestees: chocolate, mandarins, a warm sweater, and maybe an anonymous OV card.
- Provides emotional support to released arrestees: thanks them, asks how they have experienced their arrest, and how they are at that moment.
- Introduces the possibility of ex-arrestee support.
- One of the arrestee support persons at a station calls the coordinators of arrestee support and tells them the name(s) of the released arrestee(s).
- Has for him/herself: warm clothes, a phone with a full battery, a book for the wait.

2 arrestee support team members at each police station

An alternative check-in: [Mushroom mediation](#)

Used : ActionWellbeinghandbook.pdf, [NVC De-Escalation Handout.](#)