

This July *Present Time* shows the increasing power and effectiveness of RCers on many fronts—in meeting the current crises, in fine-tuning our liberation work, in bringing RC theory and practice to the wide world, and in leading and teaching under new conditions. For the October issue, please send us articles and poems by August 17, and changes to the back-pages lists by August 24.

Lisa Kauffman and Katie Kauffman, editors
719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA • publications@rc.org

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An Unprecedented Opportunity

From a talk to Co-Counselors, on Zoom, by Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People) and Tim Jackins (International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities), June 7, 2020

Tim Jackins: Welcome, everyone. Thank you for making the effort to get here on such short notice. I'm very pleased you are here. We are here to be part of a big struggle to change the world into one that is no longer based on mistreating and exploiting people. Our societies are functioning worse and worse for the vast majority of the world's people. And present conditions are making everything obvious enough that the possibility of change seems within reach. Barbara?

Barbara Love: Thank you. I'm so excited about this gathering. There are eight hundred-plus people participating! We are here because we care and because we are committed and determined to have a new world.

What's new right now in this historical moment is that the whole world seems to be on board [ready to act together]. That is new and exciting and opens up powerful possibilities for changing the world. This is the moment we have been waiting for.

The world is burning up, and a climate-change denier is in the position of power in one of the most powerful countries in the world. A pandemic killer is loose in the world, and hundreds of thousands of people are dying. Meanwhile, the primary concern of a bunch of people is to get the economy open again. Extraordinary! Just extraordinary.

What has prompted us to come together at this moment is that racism—individual, systemic, institutional racism—is on glaring display in its raw, naked form. It is seen and understood by more people probably than at any time in history. More

people can see it, understand it, and recognize it as reprehensible and wrong and needing to be changed. This is new. This is different. It doesn't mean that racism is new or that it hasn't shown itself in a form like this before. But for it to be seen and recognized so universally—that is new. *That* is powerful. *That* is different.

Three things are coming together—COVID-19, climate change, and this global spotlight on racism. This is creating an unprecedented moment in history. I'm calling it the Moment of the Millennia. We are going to seize this moment to make the changes we've been wanting to make, to create a new world that is characterized by fairness and justice and equity. We will seize this moment to usher in that new world.

I'm also calling this an existential moment. We literally face a threat to our existence—the climate crisis. The peril is real, and it is clear to nearly everyone. We know what needs to be done. At the same time, there are people who will be silent, who will deny, who will derail, disrupt, avoid, and pretend. There are people who could make a significant difference—and what do they do? They pull us out of the agreements that could lessen this threat to our existence. They refuse to provide the funds to the nations that need them to make the changes that are necessary to avert the climate crisis. They revoke regulations and policies that could make a difference. We see the nature of the struggle. The veil of ignorance has been pierced. Things will never be the same again. This reality allows us to make the changes that are needed.

COVID-19 has rocked the world. Probably more glaringly than the climate crisis, it has shown us the cracks and the crevices, the disequilities, the inequities and disproportionalities in our societies. Frontline workers who are bearing the brunt of the burden are disproportionately Black and Brown. We bang our pots and pans, we call them heroes, but we haven't been able to raise their wages, give them personal protective equipment, give them sick leave, or extend their vacation time. COVID-19 rates of infection, rates of hospitalization, and rates of death show the disproportionalities that have always been there, but that we have been able to ignore and slide right over. We have been able to pretend that they don't exist. That has changed. We can no longer ignore those disproportionalities.

The death of George Floyd—and, I always add, of the two Native men killed by Chauvin before he killed Floyd—with no accountability and no consequences; the deaths of Breonna Taylor and hundreds of others—these deaths are not unusual. They are not new. What is different is that more people know about them. More people have the information. My cousin was killed by a police chokehold just a few years ago, uttering those same words, "I can't breathe." There was no protest because it was an everyday occurrence. But this little device [she holds up a smartphone] has made all the difference. Information about what happens can no longer be hidden. It can no longer be disputed. And it can be shared worldwide. People are in the streets worldwide. That is different.

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MEETING THE CURRENT CRISES

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Two years ago, I wrote a “roll call” on the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members. It was a roll call of Black people who had been killed in police custody with no accountability. Someone wrote back to the list saying, “Oh, those people must have been doing something wrong for the police to kill them. The police would never have killed them if they hadn’t been doing something wrong.” I don’t think I would get that kind of letter today. I don’t think anyone would be mistaken in that fashion. The veil covering racism has been pulled back. Racism has been exposed in a way that cannot be disputed, both in the United States and globally.

I suggest you do the following things:

- *Discharge!* Discharge despair. Discharge discouragement—discouragement is always old. Discharge hopelessness. Discharge powerlessness.
- Remember the truth about us. Remember our love, our goodness, our brilliance, our connection, our power. This truth will be crucial to us in the days ahead.
- Hold out *your* vision of a world that works well for everyone. Lift up your voice, share your thinking. Describe in detail the world you want. Do not do this because you are an ally. Do this because *you* want a world characterized by equity, fairness, and justice. Do this for you.
- Rally the people around you—in your workplace, in your family, in suburbia, in your gentrified neighborhood.

Rally your community of people to get behind you and your vision—because this is the moment when we can do this; we can do this together.

RC theory and practice give us a particular vantage point—one outside the distortions caused by an oppressive society; by racism, genocide, anti-Semitism, sexism and male domination, classism, ageism, the oppression of young people, and so on. Use that vantage point to direct your efforts to create this new world to replace the collapsing society, a world that works well for everyone.

Tim: I would add one small step. Many of us need to get farther out into the world. Our distresses have held us back from finding out about what’s really going on [happening]. Our fears (for example, about COVID-19) can make us sit back and mostly “listen about” reality. But I think we have to go out there to find out what is really going on. We have to be thoughtful and not take unnecessary chances, but we can challenge ourselves where our fears have left us too scared to find out about reality. Have sessions, and then take a couple of steps farther out than you have ever done before.

Barbara: Tim mentioned that we may be scared. Of course we are. But that’s something to be discharged. Notice all your feelings. Don’t judge any of them. Feel them, feel them, and let them go. To People of the Global Majority (and actually to all of us), your rage is righteous. You’re entitled to it. Feel it, discharge it. But don’t be seduced by the idea that rage will give you energy and help

you as you engage in action. That’s false. If you don’t discharge it, it can “eat you up.” It is to be discharged.

Your natural zest, energy, power, and brilliance are enough. You are enough. Anything that whispers in your ear that you are “not the one,” that “Barbara must be talking about those other people, not me,” is something to be discharged. You are the one.

Tim: We are here to support each other. We are here to borrow each other’s resource to move ahead. We are here to change our perspectives, using each other. We can do great things, just as any human can. We will get more chances. But, as Barbara said, this is a very special chance. None of us, including those who went out protesting fifty years ago, have ever seen an opportunity this big. It isn’t that it’s the last chance, but why would we pass up any chance?

We get to be alive, more alive than we’ve yet dared. We get this chance to make differences so that everyone can get the chances we’ve had and get to change the world. In RC we have (who knows how many) people all looking in the same direction, all knowing how to start thinking about this and improve our thinking as we go on. I think we have all the conditions necessary. We have work to do, and we get to happily do it, and we get to do it together.

As a final thing, Barbara and I are “unmuting” everyone so you can look at and hear all these hundreds of participants, saying and waving goodbye until next time. Unmute!



TIM JACKINS

Boldly Working Together in New Ways

From RC Teacher Update 62, by Tim Jackins, April 2020

I'm making this recording in early April of 2020, a very difficult and challenging time for the human population. I'm doing it alone at my office in my house, staying separate from as many people as I possibly can to help control the spread of the coronavirus.

CHALLENGES OF THE CORONAVIRUS

The challenge of the coronavirus is probably one of the biggest challenges each of us has had to face in our lives. It's very clear that we will meet the challenge successfully but at significant cost. I'm glad that I get to talk to you and I'm glad that you are connected to RC. I'm very pleased that we have done the work in RC that has led us to understand distress patterns and their great effect on humans' thinking and behavior. I'm very glad that we have managed to do the work to understand how much early childhood distresses have separated us and limited our perspectives.

Understanding this allows us to meet the challenge of the coronavirus much more effectively. We are together in this in a very real sense, and more than ever I think we in RC understand this connection that we have with each other and that all humans can have. We are connected. We will continue together. We will find solutions to this challenge and the later challenges that I am sure we will have to face.

Our current situation is that the virus is still spreading rapidly, sickening more and more people and killing more and more people. The virus spreads from person to person, and none of us have immunity to it since it is a new disease. We have ways of disinfecting ourselves, but clearly the most successful way of triumphing in this challenge is to keep ourselves separate enough that the virus cannot be transferred from one person to another. As we learn to do this "social distancing" in this situation, our effectiveness at slowing down the spread of the virus is becoming apparent. The virus is still spreading to new places. This is a challenge that

can happen only when humans have developed to the point that they can travel so widely. The particular aspect of the virus that makes this troublesome is that one can be infected and infectious long before one feels ill, or without ever feeling ill, and so it is passed easily and unawaresly.



ESWATINI • TIM JACKINS

This transmission is still happening. Larger and larger numbers of people are understanding the need to make large changes in their behavior in order to stop the virus. And the changes are taking place widely enough that the spread is clearly slowing down in some places, and it will slow down later in others.

Vaccines will also be developed so that this particular virus will be managed. There will be countermeasures against it, and it will not be a large threat forever. But it will have done a lot of damage. It will have sickened probably millions, it will have killed perhaps hundreds of thousands, and it will have disrupted the functioning of many societies.

A CHANCE TO TRIUMPH OVER OUR DISTRESSES

For us in RC to handle this more and more effectively, we of course have to look at what gets restimulated in us by this challenge and this situation. We need to discharge on all of the restimulations we have. We need to look clearly at what the reality of the situation is and at all of the things that have been restimulated by it. We want to use this harsh challenge as an opportunity to look at, face squarely, and discharge on distresses that we have lived with all of our lives and that have limited our functioning ever since we acquired them. We want to view this challenge as an opportunity to move forward so that we can be more effective in our lives and in changing the world. As in every challenge, we want to find a way to face the challenge and do the work needed, so that we can come out clearer and in better shape after the challenge.

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MEETING THE CURRENT CRISES

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We need to look at a whole collection of restimulations. We all have feelings of being alone from early times, and though we more and more clearly know we are not really alone any longer, especially in RC, the feelings still misguide us and often leave us acting in isolation when we could easily make contact and function in a more connected fashion. The challenge is to both work on those distresses so we can remember this more clearly and, at the same time, decide to act in spite of the way the distresses pull at us, decide to act connected with other people, to share thoughts, to remind each other that we exist here together, to encourage each other to move forward in the directions we wish.

What gets restimulated for you? The isolation? The feelings of powerlessness? The fears about damage and death? Feelings of being forgotten and needing to handle everything by oneself? There's quite a collection that we're running into. These are distresses that we've had a long, long time and that have influenced our behavior and greatly influenced the way we have felt. And of course, those feelings leave us confused about reality in the present time. The current reality is nothing like what you had to survive as a young one when you got hurt. It's often hard for us to remember that's true because the feeling of those distresses is so familiar and so persuasive. We can remind each other that we are different from when those things happened to us, that the feelings of powerlessness and aloneness are about back then, that they're not about now. Now I know, simply because you are listening to this recording [reading this article], that you are likely to have a significant number of people who know you and know you well, who care about you, who will never forget you and who you are, who will always be delighted to have contact with you.



TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA • CHUCK ESSER

A NEW REALITY WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES

The coronavirus and the conditions created by it cause real hardship. It's important that we look directly at the damage the virus itself is causing and the damage that our irrational and oppressive societies are causing under the conditions created by the virus. We need to use this as an opportunity to squarely face the reality of our current situation. We need to look at things we often shy away from [avoid]. Looking at them will illuminate the distresses that get in our way of thinking about those situations and being part of the forces that will have to move to correct them.

I think every human being, as they free themselves from the distresses that have limited their thought and perspective, will choose to play a larger and larger role in overcoming the irrationalities of our society and in creating societies that benefit everyone.

While the virus is probably disrupting everyone's life, for some of us the virus is creating very real hardships. That number of us is very likely to grow through the coming months of the virus's influence and through the years after that when the irrationalities and limitations of our societies are going to show more openly and cause more difficulty.

Facing the difficulties and dangers in the present will help us work on the distresses that have kept us turning away from those situations in the past. It will also help us understand the way society functions, which is often hidden from many of us if we have not been targets of that society. We need to understand more and more fully the irrationalities, the injustices, that we have lived under in these societies so that we can more effectively move for change and create possibilities for societies that are not limited in these ways.

This sounds like a lot of hard work. And it is. But it's work that we can do, it's work that will benefit us, each in our own minds as well as in the relationships we will be able to form as we do this work. And it will open up possibilities for us. What are the possibilities? Well, it's very clear that people better understand the limitations our societies have been showing more and more clearly. That will continue to be true in spite of efforts by our governments to confuse and misguide us. In sharp and challenging times like this one, it's very hard to hide the failures of society. This creates opportunities for us in many different ways.

First of all, there is the chance for us to more openly simply be ourselves. There is a latitude in times of great challenge that allows people to show more of themselves. We get to do that. There is an opportunity

for us to use what we know from RC to both help people get through some of their distresses and help them discover that they can move in spite of their distresses. People still think, in spite of being hurt, and people can still decide to move in the ways they figure out even if they've never been able to do it before. We can help them discover that, both by our being examples and by encouraging their thoughts and actions.

We can help the RC Community. We can do that with each other. We can be bolder with each other as counselors. We can challenge ourselves to step in closer to our Co-Counselors to offer more openly the caring and thought we have about them to challenge our separation and all of the distresses that keep us separate as Co-Counselors. This is one of our best opportunities. We can challenge ourselves as clients to more openly and fully show the struggles that we discharge on to our counselors and to invite them in as closer and closer allies in those struggles in spite of the feelings of needing to handle it alone that we carry from those early distresses. In Co-Counseling sessions, support groups, and workshops, and in our whole RC Communities, we can figure out how this struggle against irrationality is not simply an individual struggle. It's a collective struggle of our species to triumph over this, once and for all.

THE CONTINUING DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Humans clearly will meet the challenge of the coronavirus and triumph over it. I think we will all learn a great deal in the process. I think those of us in RC can use the opportunity well and make large gains at the same time. There will be other large crises. The one facing us now, that was there before the virus and will be there as we come out of this challenge, is the destruction of the environment. It's very clear that people must think more clearly and must take actions soon to change the way society has functioned and the ways we have functioned individually. Those ways have not taken into account the effect of our behavior on the environment.

The environment cannot handle much more of the damage we have unwarily inflicted. It will take big changes in society and in our lives to stop the damage from happening.

Before this moment and before the challenge of the coronavirus, one of the things that stopped efforts to fix the destruction and keep it from going on was the argument that the changes were too large for society



WASHINGTON, USA • YUKO HIBINO

and individuals to make. In the current situation we have made very large changes in our behavior individually and collectively. Governments have made very large changes in their functioning, doing things they have never done before to try to handle the challenge of the coronavirus.

Changes just as large and significant will need to be made to meet the challenge of the destruction of the environment. And I think we have proved that that's possible. There will still be much to overcome. There will be much irrationality to fight against. There will be many actions to be taken to interrupt the irrational actions that have such momentum in our societies. But those actions can be taken. And the challenge of the environment can also be met.

The challenge of the environment is a symptom of the bigger challenge of the irrationality of society. Bigger, I think, than the challenge of the coronavirus. But, the current challenge of trying to keep as many people alive through the reach of the coronavirus is a good training ground for all of us. It helps us learn how much we can change our lives individually. It helps us face the irrationalities, the inequities, the injustices of our societies. It helps us face the magnitude of the changes that are going to be necessary. And it reacquaints us with how much we care about everyone in the world.

I think we will meet the challenge of the destruction of the environment in time for almost all species to survive, including us. And we will learn a great deal from meeting that challenge as well. I look forward to finishing the current challenge together. And I look forward to meeting the challenge of getting a rational society and an environment that allows all species to persist. I look forward to doing it with you.

Next Steps with COVID

A communication to the RC Community from Tim Jackins—May 28, 2020

Dear members of the RC Community,

I greatly appreciate what you have done in response to the conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of our Communities across the world have taken large and important steps to limit the spread of this virus. This has required significant changes in the way we live. People have used many sessions to discharge the feelings and confusions that have been restimulated. They have found their thinking and taken effective actions. This has been of great benefit to us, the people we know and care about, and everyone else. Thank you.

There are still many places in the world where the number of infections from the virus is growing rapidly. Part of this is simply the spread of the virus across the world. It seems unlikely that any place is isolated enough that the people there will be unaffected.

It seems like there are months of this yet to come.

The governmental handling of the situation created by this virus has varied tremendously across the world. Some governmental bodies have openly recognized the harsh realities of the current situation, and some have not. All of these governments are constantly being pressured by individuals and groups that profit from the usual functioning of our economic systems. These profits are threatened when fewer and fewer people are working for them, especially when fewer people are working in the factories that produce the goods our lives are built on. This pressure and all the connected restimulations distort governmental policies and make the actual welfare of the people less important.

Because of these distortions, it is very important that no one thoughtlessly accept the policies that are being handed out. This is a period in which it is especially important that each of us get real, factual information about our situation; discharge on our restimulations about the situation; hear each other's thoughts about handling the situation; and decide our own course forward. As many times before, those of us who work to have our own minds may find that we choose a path that doesn't match what is being promoted by our governments and other institutions.

Almost all of us remain vulnerable to this virus. That has not changed and will not change in the near future. We do not get less vulnerable by avoiding the virus for



PAM ROBY

a longer period of time. We do, slowly and steadily, learn more about the virus, about how one acquires it, about its effect on human bodies, and about how better to treat those who are deeply affected. But we all remain very vulnerable. We don't know which of us would be most seriously affected if they acquired the virus. It is still clearly true that our most effective way forward is to deny the virus the opportunity to spread to more people. It is also clear that social isolation is the most effective way to keep the virus from spreading.

Given this situation, each of us needs to make our own decisions in concert with those around us. Each of us needs to actively undertake making these decisions, beginning now. Please use all the resources available to you: factual, discharging in sessions, and hearing each other's minds (taking turns thinking online?) in this process.

Here within the RC Community, all of our work and communication is no longer in person. All of us who work for RCCR are working from home and expect to be doing this for many months yet. We have cancelled in-person workshops for the last couple of months, and I do not see any way in which we could have in-person workshops again until at least well into the fourth quarter of the year. Most scheduled workshops are being re-organized to be Zoom workshops, which have been very effective. (There are a vast number of RC classes being held online, and many people who before could not become part of RC classes are joining online classes.) There are many steps forward we can take during these challenging times.

I look forward to us creatively moving forward together to significantly change society in this time of unexpected challenge and opportunity.

With love and appreciation,

Tim

The Need for Change

Another communication to the RC Community from Tim Jackins—June 1, 2020

Dear members of the RC Community,

As our society continues to crumble, it is less and less able to hide the oppressions on which it is based and their cruel and deadly implementation. The disruption of everyone's life due to COVID-19 is also making societal irrationality more difficult to hide.

There is increasingly overt opposition to the injustice and oppression built into our societies. Large demonstrations of outrage about racism are happening in many places in the world, and society is less able to suppress this opposition.

By restimulating old fears and isolation, our societies push us into not actively opposing what we increasingly know is unjust, oppressive, and exploitive. However, the oppressive and irrational aspects of our societies will not stop by themselves. For society to change, large numbers of us need to move into vocal, active, intelligent, and caring opposition. The more of us that can overcome the quieting effects of old distresses, the more quickly a better world for all can emerge.

Many people have been badly hurt by these societies for centuries, and some will respond in desperate,

irrational, and destructive ways. This will happen and does happen any time people have been hurt badly enough. We can take this as evidence that the changes we have been working for are needed.

Protests must occur even though they may be used by some to act irrationally. They must occur if society is going to change. Frederick Douglass, long before our picture of human irrationality developed, gave an astute analysis of situations like ours:

"Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are people who want crops without ploughing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

Please challenge yourself as fully as you ever have. Let's see what we can do.

With love and appreciation,
Tim



Postings by Tim Jackins about COVID-19

Postings by Tim Jackins about the COVID-19 pandemic are collected on the RC website at <ww.rc.org/coronavirus>.

They include guidance for holding RC classes and workshops, insights on the role of oppression in the pandemic, and thinking about how to attend demonstrations against racism without abandoning considerations for safety.

MEETING THE CURRENT CRISES

**ADOPTED BY THE 2001 WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE RC COMMUNITIES
(Reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences)**

GOAL 1:

That the elimination of racism, in particular the racism aimed at people of African heritage, be actively made an ongoing, central piece of the work of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community.

From the 2017 Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities



DIANE SHISK

In Memory of George Floyd

I am Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson, a Nigerian; Black and proudly that. I make no apologies to anyone, and it will not matter if anyone is scared of sharing a space with me or any other Black in this wide world.

Since, by my faith, I believe that a Supreme Being created this world and all that is therein, I can only refer all the Black-hating people to go locate God and ask him why He didn't make the whites the only occupants of Mother Earth.

Black-hater, I demand that you stop targeting my people with all manner of genocide.

I am enraged, outraged, and embittered at the meaningless, callous, and wicked humiliation and murder of George Floyd. Even a "common criminal" has fundamental rights and will not be condemned and killed without due process. Why was George pinned down and life suffocated out of him even as he repeatedly and helplessly pleaded that he couldn't breathe?

Were the "holier than thou" white police officers, who orchestrated and supervised the dastardly act that culminated in his death, so scared of a helpless and subdued Black USer that they couldn't handcuff him? No! How else could they have shown how "powerful" they are!

Would they have treated a white USer that way? I make bold to say, No.

We deserve our space on this Mother Earth. We deserve respect and, indeed, unreserved apologies from the whites whose ancestors massively plundered and exploited Africa's human and natural resources via deliberate acts and institutions that included slavery, colonialism, and religion.

Despite the teachings and direction in RC, I have on several occasions witnessed and experienced nuggets of racism that have left me much disturbed and disappointed. That will be a discussion for another day.

I have tried to be kind to myself by reminding my dear conscious and subconscious mind that though we are all RCers, we come from different backgrounds and have different experiences and struggles; and, most important, that I am human—no better or worse than any other. Certainly, I deserve my space, as much as any other.

I am proudly African. I weep for the senseless loss of yet another "African in diaspora."

With love from a broken heart,

Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Masha Surulere, Lagos State, Nigeria
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for USA political issues

Standing Together and Raising Our Voices against Injustice

There is a roll call in my mind that scrolls unceasingly even though I've struggled to silence it. It goes like this: George Floyd, Ahmed Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, Walter Scott, Philando Castile, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Emmett Till, and . . .

For a long time, I've forced myself to not quite forget but to not fully remember this roll call. I tell myself that if I say their names and think of these dear humans and their horrifically foreshortened lives, I won't be able to go on with daily life (too much acute pain). So much better to diminish the names and numb myself to any corresponding feelings.

I find that I can't keep the roll call out of my mind and off of my lips today, and maybe I never will be able to again. I'll have to keep all of them with me, so I never forget again and especially so I don't ever fall silent again. I must call out their names, over and over again, until their names sing through the air, from ear to ear, lip to lip, heart to heart, and no one of us can ever be silent about this again, especially not me. From this day, I refuse the

complicity of my own silence and my quietly and obediently waiting for someone else to fix this.

And a special message to all my wonderful, good-hearted white allies. I thank those of you who have reached out to me to offer me love, time, and concern during this one more time of national grief and horror at yet another flagrant, public, extra-judicial killing of an African American man and the attempted murder of another. Your regard for my feelings is very much appreciated—but at this time I need so much more from you.

I need you to discharge, raise your voice, and take action. I need you, my allies, to take full responsibility for every one of these extra-judicial killings and for each of you to raise your voices in unison as you take your power to make things change. The police are your employees, not the other way around. Since you have hired them, you can also fire them. Take your power on the local as well as on the grand scale. Your power and your voice for good are critically needed.

An additional thought, dear allies. Black people may be angry; we may feel angry with you. There may be doubt and displays of lack of trust. Black people may not be welcoming and nice to you. It's important for you to understand that this may not be personal to you, that there are centuries of reasons for those feelings. Be a true ally, and don't let these hard feelings stop you from doing what is right.

I personally thank you for doing this for me and us, but even more, I thank you for doing this for yourself, your family, your friends, and your communities. They are all being destroyed by this, just as much as I, my family, friends, and communities are.

Let us stand together and raise our voices against all injustice. This time you can make the barricades in front of me and my little Black grandson, who will, if he is lucky, fully grow up to be a Black man in the United States.

Fela Barclift

Brooklyn, New York, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



SLK

“We Are Descendants of a Brilliant and Powerful People”

It is a contradiction to the message of racism to be visible with my voice, my mind. I am discharging on the heartbreak of racism and its effect on me and my people. For me, it is like a dam breaching or a festering wound breaking open.

Some of us, like me, may feel shocked into numbness. We may find it hard initially to share with people who are not African heritage. I think the first thing to be done by all is to discharge, discharge, discharge. Undoubtedly many feelings come to mind for all of us.

I think it important that our allies be brutally honest in noticing and discharging on the feelings that come up about the horrific murder of Mr. Floyd, as well as any feelings about the protests and demonstrations.

This work is not about white people trying to get something right on their own [by themselves]. This is about the interruption of connection to wonderful humans of African descent. It is about reclaiming the connection, taking on the fight to stay in there, and doing it.

There have been centuries of lies, misinformation, injustice, marginalization, mistreatment, and killings of my people. There are tons of [huge amounts of] unaware behavior and oppressive actions that we notice, deal with, or file away on a regular basis. To think best about us, you have to see us as fully human, equal to you in every way, knowing that we have as brilliant minds, as good souls, and are as wonderful as every other human.

The mistreatment and messages of racism toward African-heritage people are aware and unaware and are deeply embedded in our society. It's important that there be an acknowledgment of the disconnection, misinformation, and unawareness.

The abuse, mistreatment, and killings of my people are personal and heartbreaking. In the 1950s a cousin was killed by white men, and an uncle was threatened

with death unless he left the state before sunup. He did not return for fifty years, too terrified to post a letter to his family or return for the funerals of his mother and a sister.

A white man came to our church when I was about age ten and threatened to come to our house and kill my dad that evening. Several men from the church went home and got their guns and waited at our house into the night. Three white farmers were made aware of the situation and promised my dad this would never happen again. It didn't, and these men contributed to our annual homecoming for years until they died.

Once, while walking on our country road, three white men in a truck aimed it at me. Last year, as I was walking by a white man on the sidewalk, he said, "I could kill you and everybody that looks like you."

Once, on a bus, a white woman told me to move from my seat near her because I was Black and I "smelled." After politely asking her if she was aware of which century she lived in, she continued to say derogatory things about me. I cursed her out soundly and told her to shut up and not say another word, which she did. When I exited the bus later a white man got off and congratulated me and said she had been harassing a Black man on the bus before me; however, neither he nor anyone else on the bus had said anything.

In the midst of the Katrina disaster, during which many residents, mostly Black, were stuck in that building asking for help, a cashier in a store said with a smirk, "So are you going to go down there and help those people?" I did not smash the cash register into his face. I have also experienced the following: Being followed in stores as if I would steal. Waiting in line to purchase something and the cashier looking at the white person behind me and saying, "Next." When I spoke up, their saying, "Oh I didn't see you." In another time and store, I was the only one waiting in line and the cashier came forward but asked loudly

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in the small store, "Who's next?" and waited to see if the two other customers, who were white, would say they were ready.

There have been many, many, many more situations like this. I mostly want you to know that we experience targeting and mistreatment on a continual basis.

There was a Zoom call recently with Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People). Almost a hundred RCers of African heritage from around the diaspora showed up [came]. It was tremendously empowering to see each other, connect, and discharge. We have a shared experience of being continually assaulted by the ongoing oppressive messages and behavior of racism. Our history is that we were stolen from Africa and chained in the most in-

humane of circumstances in the bottom of a ship. Many thousands died during the voyage to the Americas. We were sold, misused, and abused horrifically. Africans were seen as not human (as savages) and stupid.

The reality is we are descendants of a brilliant and powerful people with a sense of community and connection to other humans and our environment. It is important for all humans to keep that in the forefront of their minds. It is important for us to stand together and stand up against all oppression and injustice.

Marion Ouphouet

Seattle, Washington, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



PAM ROBY

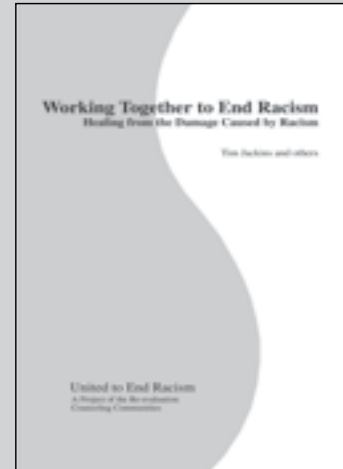
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Thanks very much!

Rational Island Publishers

Stories from an African-Heritage Catholic

I converted to Catholicism in 1952. I was attending Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, which was founded by Saint Katherine Drexel for Black and Native American students. She was not officially declared a saint by the Church at the time but achieved sainthood in 2000. I had made a vow with my best friend from high school that I would not let those Catholics convert me. I was Baptist and he was Methodist. What we knew of the Catholic Church was that Catholics worshipped statues.

My freshman year, I was impressed by two Catholic student friends. They were easygoing, loving, generous people. One found it difficult to stay in the “state of grace.” I had admired that student for trying so hard. It piqued my interest in learning more about Catholic teachings. During the summer of my freshman year, I talked with my parents about taking instructions in the Catholic faith. When I returned to Xavier University for my second year, I enrolled in a theology class. I was impressed when we talked about encyclicals, especially *Rerum Novarum*, which addressed the rights of workers to organize. Several other things in that class impressed me also. Based on that information, I decided I would become Catholic. I saw the Church as a good vehicle for making positive changes in the world. I wrote to my parents and told them of my plans, and they approved. However, my older sister who was home at the time said that all hell broke loose in the household because of my decision.

When I went home for the summer after my second year, I informed my parents that I would be attending St. Paul Catholic Church, the only Catholic Church in my hometown of Leesburg, Florida, USA. The congregation was all white, and my parents



ARTHUR RIVER, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA • LYNDALE KATZ

were very concerned that I would be mistreated there. My father decided he would drive me to church and wait until mass [the service] was over, to make sure I was safe. My first service at that church was eventful. At that time, when we received Communion, communicants knelt at the Communion rail. When I knelt down to receive Communion, all of the whites got up and refused to receive Communion with me. When I received Communion and left the Communion rail, they knelt down to receive the Sacrament.

At the end of mass as I was leaving, a woman of Irish ancestry approached me, apologized, and introduced me to her son. She

stated that they would look for me the next Sunday so I could sit with them, and she would see to it that this incident would never happen again. As I was getting in my father’s car, he instructed me that I should never talk to a white woman without some witnesses. I returned to the church the following Sunday and sat with the woman and her son. We went up to receive Communion together, and no one got up from the Communion rail.

The summer went along uneventfully, but my parents were still fearful. I returned to Xavier University for my third year and joined the Interracial Council, founded by students from the Catholic colleges and universities. Two priests were our spiritual directors—one from Xavier and one from Loyola University. We planned to take action in different areas of the city. One action was visiting orphanages, another was integrating the Catholic churches of the New Orleans Archdiocese, and the third was integrating the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. We visited the orphanages as an integrated team without any incidents. We strategized for the integration of the churches and the schools.

My senior year at Xavier, we began our integration work at the Catholic churches. A letter was written by the Archbishop to all churches to welcome us. Teams of one Black student and two white students were sent to various churches to attend mass. My team went to the front of the church to about the fifth row, sat

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down, and waited for mass to begin. An usher approached us and stated that I had to move to the back of the church where the Colored section was. One of the white students responded that we were not going to move. Shortly after, mass started, and a policeman came to escort us out of the church. All of the teams returned to our respective campuses and reported our activities to our spiritual advisers, who then encouraged the Archbishop to send out a stronger letter to the pastors of the churches. We were asked to return to the same churches that we had gone to before, which we did. An usher approached us again and said we had to move to the back. One of the white students spoke to the usher and asked him to check with the pastor about the letter he had received from the Archbishop welcoming all Catholics to the churches. He checked with the pastor and when he returned said I could stay—and told us we were troublemakers. We continued to attend various churches, without many incidents.

To integrate the Catholic schools, we made arrangements with the principals to speak at one of their assemblies. We talked about all of us being brothers and sisters, the children of one God, and that all Catholics should be accepted at the schools. I graduated in 1953, and the schools began to integrate the following fall.

Afterward I was inducted into the armed services. I met a young white man who had been a senior at one of the schools I had spoken at, and he recognized me. He stated that he had gone home and enthusiastically spoken with his parents about the schools being integrated. His parents had vehemently disagreed with him. They had informed him that if he did not change his mind, they would not be paying for his college education. So he'd joined the army.

I continued to work for social change in different places, particularly in the Catholic Church. My next breakthrough was in the Los Angeles [California, USA]

Archdiocese, where we formed the Catholic Human Relations Council of Southern California (against the Archbishop's wishes). Our first effort was getting Catholic support for a fair housing proposition on the state ballot. The Archbishop opposed our efforts and did not encourage Catholics to participate. We had other activities that we participated in, but with the opposition from the Archbishop it was difficult to organize Catholics for social change. The Archbishop later retired, and a more progressive archbishop was appointed. He was encouraged by a priest who had worked with the Catholic Human Relations Council and recommended to the Pope that I be made a Knight of Saint Gregory, for my efforts in social change in the Catholic Church. It was the highest honor that can be given to a Catholic layperson. I got it in writing.

I came into Co-Counseling in 1982. In 1992, a jury acquitted three white Los Angeles police officers who had beaten Rodney King [a construction worker turned writer and activist after the police brutality]. Many in the Black community protested, and some Korean merchants and their stores were attacked. A gathering of Korean and Black Catholics met under the auspices of the Archbishop (who was in attendance). I demonstrated the Co-Counseling listening technique with a Korean merchant. He expressed his forgiveness for what had happened. I asked him how he felt when he first heard the news about his store, and tears came to his eyes. It was a step toward bringing the two groups together, and the Archbishop later said that this was what was needed in all the Catholic parishes.

There are many stories.

Horace B. Williams, Jr.
Pasadena, California, USA



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RC and Racism



I have recently completed teaching another RC fundamentals class. Teaching the segment where we ask, “What goals do we have for ourselves? Our family? Our allies?” made me re-establish my personal goals for my RC allies. This included their work on their racism.

Improvements are needed in many of our RC Communities. People of the Global Majority (PGM) are brought into RC and do not stay long in the Community. Excuses are made that can place the blame on the PGM.

Racism is still often viewed as a problem for “others” and as not really having a negative impact on white people. Please look at how you have been impacted. Look at what you have missed out on [not experienced] by not having close, loving relationships with PGM outside and inside of RC. Remember that an important RC Community goal is ending racism and prioritize that goal, starting with yourself.

I want to share some of my feelings about RC and racism. Some of my most intense and painful experiences have been in RC. In the outside world, racism, whether systemic, overt, or subtly shady, is expected and is dealt with in many different manners. It is expected that it will be played out [expressed] in unsuspected ways. PGM keep our eyes open to the possibility that what is happening is a result of the identities we carry. This is necessary for survival as well as exhausting.

In RC we have a well-thought-out theory. Folks are encouraged to work hard to eliminate racism and discharge on their identity challenges. Unaware racism is not expected. When racism catches me unaware in RC, it feels like a major, open-wound betrayal. I have been verbally attacked in classes and groups of “good white people” whom I thought I knew and trusted and have been caught off guard [unprepared].

As white people you can’t have experienced what it feels like when racist mistreatment and ignorance of oppression theory are directed at you and not a single person speaks up—that moment when everyone in the room is aware that an incredible gaffe [mistake] has been made and a long, empty silence hangs in the air. Everyone is aware of the racially insensitive remark, yet not one person comes to assist or address the obvious uncomfortable, awkward moment.

Usually, if I take the initiative to counsel with the individual about it, I may hear, “I don’t recall” In other words, “I can’t be bothered to remember because it wasn’t important enough to me.” Or, “You misunderstood; it wasn’t racist but a class issue.” (No oppression is okay.) Or, “When you see me say or do something racist, could you tell me?”

It is not the responsibility of a member of an oppressed group to identify the patterns being acted out by someone in the oppressor role. People in oppressed groups are dealing with so much more than those in the oppressor roles can begin to comprehend. If I choose to care enough about our relationship to tell you that you’ve said something racist and you respond with, “Couldn’t you say it a little nicer?” this is off-putting and dismissive of what has been shared with you. The funny part is that by the time we are having this conversation, I have taken it to several sessions, and this is the nicest version of how I feel about the behavior aimed at me. A Person of the Global Majority should not have to fight against these repeatedly oppressive behaviors, seemingly alone.

Something else that happens is the “interview,” the one-sided questioning of those new to RC. “Who taught you fundamentals? Did they review the ‘Blue Pages’? How many weeks was your class? How do you know so-and-so?” All of this is done without sharing any information about themselves and can be, or seem to be, questioning the new person’s RC competence and knowledge. I’ve even been quizzed about where I studied in college!

AN “ALTERING” EXPERIENCE

I recently had an altering experience around the tackling of racist behaviors in RC. A Zoom call was set up with the Global Majority leaders in my Region prior to a workshop led by Rudy Nickens (Regional Reference Person for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, USA). I was bringing two new-to-RC PGM Co-Counselors to the workshop. The organizer asked us what would help the workshop go better for my group. I shared my concerns about some of the ways that racism shows up at Co-Counseling events. She sent out an e-mail to white Co-Counselors in our Region. Here are some excerpts from her e-mail:

“As we get ready for our Regional Ending Racism and Building Diverse Communities Workshop, I’m

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inviting you to a one-hour Zoom call for us white Co-Counselors to discharge and think together. Joining the call is completely optional. But having this time together will help the workshop go better both for us and for our beloved Co-Counselors of the

Global Majority. It will let us arrive more connected to each other and with our minds headed in a common direction.

“Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People) has been encouraging Co-Counselors to get better at noticing how ‘domination’ behaviors show up within RC. We are good, committed, loving, brilliant people who want things to go well for everyone! So, if we noticed those behaviors, we wouldn’t do those things! The better we get at noticing them, the better we will get at changing things. Since many of these same patterns show up across all oppressions, this work moves us forward on many fronts at once. (Don’t you just love that?!)

“On this call, we will have a mini-session to notice how we see domination patterns showing up at our RC workshops. We’ll share our lists with each other to help us all get a bigger picture of how these things play out [are acted out]. After that, we’ll have another mini to discharge on whatever gets in our way of thoughtfully interrupting those behaviors—in ourselves or when we see them playing out around us.

“We are thoroughly good people and get to be pleased with ourselves! At the same time, oppressive conditioning has kept us from moving as fast as we would like to end oppression.

“Working on things in this way is a really helpful and hopeful approach to moving ourselves and our Region forward. I hope you will try to join one of the calls!”

Co-Counseling is an incredibly valuable tool and resource for me. Because of my commitment to myself and my Co-Counselors I stay in RC when many others have chosen to escape the unaware oppressive patterns and behaviors aimed at us. I am a diligent Co-Counselor. I have regular hour-and-fifteen-minute face-to-face sessions several times a week.

Many times, I have thought that without the “sacred space” created in Black Liberation and Community Development Workshops and my Black support group, I could not continue in RC. I love Rudy’s [Rudy Nickens’s] words: “Racism existed before race.” It reminds us that racism is an artificial construct designed to keep a mindset in place to assure that wealth can be acquired by the “one percent.”

Trusting one’s Co-Counselor is key in any Co-Counseling relationship. I cannot forget yet I do try to forgive the past betrayals. I am still “in a counseling relationship” due to our Community-designed circumstances, but so far, I can never trust enough that I can relax thoroughly and give all of myself. I have to stay on guard and vigilant in order to be ready to respond to another incident of hurtful behavior and do so in a clear, rational, elegant manner. After all, I am always placed in a position of being expected to fall into the role of the classic “angry Black woman.” That is a role they can easily dismiss and choose not to engage with, due to my perceived “damage.” This is not a safe way to be in a Co-Counseling Community that seeks to be a safe, brave environment.

The manner in which M— organized and thought well of all of us was exemplary. For me this was the first time the safety of a workshop was heightened! My “newbies” [new participants] felt totally at ease to interact, be authentically themselves, get deeper discharge, and find folks that they wanted to Co-Counsel with upon returning home.

A year ago, I would not have thought this possible. I had wondered if we would ever see a shift toward our primary goal of ending white racist patterns within RC. I see hope and am optimistic that a shift has begun. It will be important that my good white-people allies continue to uncover their own unaware racist and superiority oppressor patterns and begin the patient process of “checking” their own behavior, delving deeper into their own societally accepted roadblocks, and interrupting the unaware oppressor patterns of their own people.

I deeply appreciate the brilliance of Barbara Love’s leadership in this work and the thorough follow-through of our workshop organizer that reaped an incredible result for all of the PGM Co-Counselors in attendance.

Anne McAndrew
Rochester, New York, USA

Immigrants of the Global Majority

I am pleased to be the Information Coordinator for Immigrants of the Global Majority. I am a child of Chinese immigrants to Malaysia and an immigrant to the United States. My Chinese ancestry, my experience as a child of immigrants, and being an immigrant myself have profoundly shaped my life. They have influenced the way I experience and interpret life, my strengths and power, and my distresses.

In the United States, as in other white-dominated countries, it is a given that one's race determines how one is viewed and treated. Yet, as an immigrant coming to the shores of the United States some forty-two years ago, at first I did not recognize the particular brand of U.S. racism. It was quite different from the separation and discrimination I had experienced in a former British colony with a majority of People of the Global Majority (PGM).

When I first joined RC, some thirty-plus years ago, it was useful to have the safe space with other PGM to understand and to discharge on the effects of racism. But it was not until I started working on my immigrant heritage and experience that I gained a picture of the totality of my experience and understood the different forces that had shaped me, my distresses, and hence the path to my re-emergence.

In the white-dominated Western countries, PGM immigrants and children of immigrants share similar experiences of racism with other PGM and also very different and particular experiences as refugees, immigrants, and children of immigrants. Many of us come from

countries under the yoke of Western colonialism that have robbed our nations and pitted us against one another, even in our own home countries.

Immigrants are any people who have left their country for another country. They may be refugees who are forced to move in order to escape dangerous and life-threatening situations. Most immigrants move for opportunities for a better life. In current times, most move because they are forced to, due to the effects of colonialism and Western economic dominance and imperialism, which have impoverished them and made living conditions at home untenable. For some, the lure of the West is due to the colonial and Western capitalist indoctrination that "the West is best," and people move there for better educational and work opportunities. Others move as a result of love and marriage and other personal reasons.

All over the world, refugees and immigrants have innovated, built viable communities, re-energized cities, and filled essential low-paying jobs that the local folks do not



CAROL WILBURN

want. Yet refugees and immigrants are often not welcomed, especially when economic times are not good, and they are often scapegoated and blamed for the country's economic ills. For PGM immigrants to Western countries, their darker skin color in addition to their different cultures, languages, religions, traditions, lifestyles, and perspectives make them "alien" and unassimilable, despite the constant racist pressure to assimilate.

For PGM immigrants, refugees, and children of immigrants, assimilation is the racism that we experience. The pressure to act like, dress like, talk like, think like, be like the dominant culture denies any value in our own people, culture, traditions, and different ways of life. It renders us and our ways as "less than" and invisible, and it is used to target, marginalize, and oppress us. Assimilation has profoundly affected immigrants as well as children of immigrants as we struggle to stay connected to our histories, our people, and our families that often span two or more nations and to reclaim our inherent goodness, power, and significance.

I started leading workshops for PGM immigrants some fifteen years ago. It has made a big difference for me and for other PGM immigrants to have the space to connect, have each other, share, learn from each other, discharge, and cheer each other on toward our re-emergence. I very much look forward to continuing this important work.

Cheng Imm Tan
 Information Coordinator for
 Immigrants of the Global Majority
 Pulau Pinang, West Malaysia
 cit2288@gmail.com

Classism and the Climate Crisis

I convened a topic group on classism and the climate crisis at an Ending Classism Workshop that Dan Nickerson [International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People] recently led for our Region (the U.S. states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee). I talked about how classism has contributed to the climate crisis—separating us from each other and encouraging exploitation of and damage to the environment. Then we took turns discharging on a couple of questions:

1) How has classism affected your perspective on climate change and the environment?

2) From your class perspective, what opportunities do you see for taking action to address the climate crisis?

Below are some insights from the group.



Dale Everts
Durham, North Carolina, USA

I am an African American, raised-poor, working-class woman from the southern United States. I was pleased to hear my Regional Reference Person, who is white, Protestant, an elder, male, and middle class say that the large portion of U.S. emissions come from white middle- and owning-class people and communities. This makes sense to me because of the capitalistic, for-profit country I live in. For me that automatically means class separation.

I have a tree in my backyard that is leaning toward a power line. This occurred when hurricane winds came through my city. The power company has not come to cut it down because I live in a working-class side of town. The power company's decision is based on classism as far as I am concerned, and also racism because I am African American. The economic and racial divide continues. This is what it is like to try to recover after being hit by a climate-change-driven disaster. [Since the workshop, a severe storm hit Angelia's city and sent the tree through her roof. She and her family have moved to a motel while repairs are being made.]

Emissions anywhere hurt the climate everywhere. We need to learn to discharge the old distress recordings that keep us divided and separated so that we can create a livable environment for all of us. My Regional Reference Person talked about being told as a youngster



BANGALORE, INDIA • TIM JACKINS

that with hard work he could be anything he wanted to be—but he wasn't told about the cost of doing that to the community and world. I wasn't necessarily told that I could be anything I wanted to be, though I worked hard. We have both paid a high price because of the oppressive nature of classism and racism. Success in stopping climate change depends on people everywhere developing a real sense of being in this together with people everywhere, regardless of class or race.



Angelia James
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

I am not alone. We do not need to be stuck in whatever class we are in. Rather, we need to be connected to direct production workers to unite and inspire others to impact climate change. We can listen to people's stories of hope. Hope is present in all classes. Hope looks forward.



Mary Leong
Cary, North Carolina, USA

The effects of being mixed class (working class trying to get to middle class) in combination with genocidal fears from being Native-raised-white collide for me to create numbness about many current issues, including what's happening with our climate. In session I can pull my attention toward hope by noticing the significance of even small acts in regard to climate change. Wherever I am, I engage people to talk about the climate, remembering we are more alike than we are different.



Jody Usher
Anderson, South Carolina, USA

The connection of the owning class to the early conservation movement got me thinking about my family. My great-grandfather was in the lumber industry. He made money from the trees. He helped determine the "value" of the trees for what became a U.S. National Forest. He had an amazing appreciation of the earth but also saw the money it could make our family. Over the years the money has been "laundered" [converted and transmitted] through a business and the stock market so

that we can hardly pay attention to where it came from. It was helpful to counsel on "our money being trees."



Susan Lindsay
Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

My white (European heritage), middle-class, male upbringing in the United States emphasized individual acts and initiative. I needed to stand on my own two feet [act alone], and success depended on what I did, not necessarily what I did with others. I was told I could be anything I wanted, but not what effect my choices might have on my family and my community. Through sports, I learned about working in teams to compete, but not how to organize for broad social change that could benefit us all. Because of classism and racism, my perspective has often lacked a sense of common purpose and connection to others.



Dale Everts
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders in the care of the environment



Taking Responsibility for One's Own Re-emergence

As a client, it is helpful to take responsibility for and plan one's own re-emergence instead of assuming that someone else will do it for one.

This, in a broad sense, will include the finding and training of one's own counselors. In a more specific way, it will include the planning of each individual session ahead of time (with the plans able to be put aside or postponed if one's counselor has been thinking well and comes up with an even more effective plan for the session). In detail, it includes memorizing specific commitments, commitments against internalized oppression, "frontier" commitments, and a litany of self-validations to run through when alone or without attention from others, in order to block the distress of a pattern from invading and taking over one's mind.

This sort of in-chargeness can operate both in and out of session. "Holding" or "keeping" directions and commitments between sessions disrupts the chronic hold of patterns on one-self, and taking physical action can often disrupt a pattern when it is difficult to contradict it emotionally or intellectually.

*Harvey Jackins**
From page 63 of *The List*

* Harvey Jackins was the founder and first International Reference Person of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

Direct Production Workers and COVID-19

I have been thinking about Direct Production Workers. This term confused people when I first proposed it. People could not quite understand what it was and its significance. Now as the economy shuts down, it is clearer what this role is and how essential it is. Outside of RC, the word “frontline worker” is being used. It is similar in meaning.

I would ask frontline workers, “Is it safe to go to work, and what are the conditions under which we can work safely?”

Power has shifted. We Direct Production Workers are in a position to demand the protection that we need.

My opinion is that no one should be allowed in supermarkets except for the employees. They should all be tested. If positive, they should automatically be paid wages to stay out of the workplace for as long as they need it. Customers should bring their orders or make them online, and the orders should be brought to them outdoors. There should be required space between workers and between customers.

For people working at home: Beware of “I have to do a good job” patterns. Our goal is not to “do a good job.” It is to survive in a way that will do the least damage to ourselves and the society. You now have the opportunity to make your job what it should be. Take breaks, go outside, stretch. If you don’t need eight hours to do your job, don’t feel like you have to work that long. Who is going to know?

To parents of children who are now schooling at home: I taught for four years in a boarding school where students could choose whether or not to attend class.

Some did not attend classes. They are fine now. Do what is best for the young people and the family. Do what make sense. For teachers: Resist the pull to meet the demands put on you. Do what is best for you and others.



At the time of this writing, parents in the United States are being told that schooling from home is just for a few weeks. I doubt that very much. I think going to school is finished for the year.

Things are changing. We do not have to conform. Do what is best for you and everyone else. Start living the future rational society.

For those who are facing job and income loss: You do not have to pay your bills. Poor folks have skills. You know you can hold the institutions off [keep them away] for months if not years. Call them up, reschedule payments. Pay a little. Do not spend your last dollar paying bills. Spend it on something that will enhance your survival. Like an RC class, for instance.

The system will be overwhelmed with unpaid bills. It will not want to lose your business. It is not going to send someone to your house

during quarantine. There will be fewer workers to keep up with the enforcement anyway. The customer service people are your friends. Treat them well—they may do a little “extra” for you.

It is possible to figure out how to survive the collapse. We will also be grieving some losses.

Don’t let the internalized patterns of capitalism put you at risk if you can help it at all.

My sister is a nurse working with homeless people. She does not have the proper equipment to keep herself safe. This week the testing training was stopped due to supply issues and dysfunctional test equipment. She and I have had frequent “sessions” by text. Her daughter just made it through a lot of border closings and flight cancellations to get home to take care of her mom and grandmother. She had been working against the Ebola virus in the Congo. She will be in quarantine for fourteen days as long as she does not test positive.

The frontline health workers are organizing in RC. Please connect to them. There may also be a group for those living with or who are allies to frontline workers.

I will be starting a group for Direct Production Workers and others who cannot “work at home” or get out of the way of COVID-19.

Keep discharging and thinking.

Dan Nickerson
International Liberation Reference
Person for Working-Class People
Freeport, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members



COVID, Sexism, and Classism

Dearest Diane [Diane Balser, International Liberation Reference Person for Women],

It is always hard for me to put female first, and these days it is harder still. Thank you for keeping us looking at our liberation in the midst of COVID-19.

I sometimes feel alone in RC women's work when working-class and raised-poor experiences are not talked about much, so I will share what is happening in my life right now with the devastating combination of COVID-19, sexism, and classism. I hope to hear from more working-class and raised-poor women.

Right now, I am discharging and trying to figure out how to stay close with my sister, whom I adore, while we cannot see one another due to COVID-19. She lives in a rural area three hours from me. We typically get together for an "overnight" every month. I have not seen her since February. High speed Internet is not available where she is, so we have not been able to Zoom. And there is no privacy in her home for her to have open conversations with me on the phone.

We were raised poor and working class and are both over sixty. She has significant underlying health conditions, as does her husband. Her husband was raised poor—some of it living in a school bus. They have worked at poor-paying jobs that have put their lives at risk much of their lives. He is a dear, loving husband whom I also love; this marriage is the best relationship she has ever had. *And* he is a Trump supporter. He is also a survivalist and conspiracy theorist and uses a lot of drugs and alcohol. She has experienced much violence at the hands of men that she has loved. Her current husband is not violent, but it is almost impossible for her to say no to a man.

She does not agree with him politically and wants to stay safe from COVID-19. He believes that COVID-19 is a hoax. As a result, he does many things that endanger himself and her—going places, refusing to wear a mask, inviting people to visit, and so on.

I have taught her to Co-Counsel, and she is a good listener to me and her friends. Because of our relationship she uses very little alcohol or drugs—none when we are together. Yet it is tricky [complicated] for me to express my concerns, because if she sees that I am concerned, she will just tell me what she thinks I want to hear. Usually when we are together, I just listen, and she talks and talks and talks and discharges as she goes. By the end of the time she has sorted something out and goes home stronger. Yet now with COVID-19, we cannot see one another, and I am losing her to the sexism. And I fear that I may lose her to COVID-19 as well.

It is breaking my heart and I have yet to figure out what to do. She is one of the dearest people in my life. It is devastating for me to watch the sexism tear her down and put her life at risk daily. This is not new. I have watched her make unsafe choices my whole life, but we were making gains, and now there seem to only be losses as long as we cannot see each other.

And, as my heart breaks, I am unable to talk about it to my middle-class husband of over thirty years. Though we have worked hard on our relationship and he is a pretty [quite] good ally to me as a woman, when it comes to classism, he's lost. Though he talks excellent class theory, I have not been able to truly move him on classism. If I try to talk with him about my sister, he will invariably make some comment to the effect that he doesn't understand how she can be so stupid. I have gone quiet and don't know what to do. I no longer talk to him about her. I bear this all alone. Writing this helps me know that I need help here. I'll start with some sessions.

As for my sister, I feel like I should say something positive, uplifting or enlightening, but I can't find it. I'll just keep discharging and reaching for her.

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women

Language Liberation and “Mental Health” Liberation

Excerpts from a topic group led by Patxi Xabier Odriozola, the International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting, at the “Mental Health” Liberation Leaders’ Conference in Pennsylvania, USA, October 2019

I will share some information with you, and what I want is for you to taste it in your session and bring back your thinking.

LANGUAGE OPPRESSION AND “NORMALITY”

We all know what “normal” is. It’s that tiny, reduced, stupid finite box that the system says is the only space we can live and think in. It’s reinforced by “mental health” oppression.

Let’s see how language oppression works on that little box of “normality.” What is “normal” for language? “Normal” is that everybody speaks English. If you’re avoiding using your own language, you may be collaborating with “normal.” If you are hiding your heritage, language, culture, or accent, you could be working for the box and making it bigger and stronger in you and your relationships.

BEING AWARE WHEN SPEAKING A DOMINANT LANGUAGE

When you are speaking in a dominant language, it can be easy to produce dominant relationships without noticing it. This doesn’t mean that everyone who speaks dominant languages is dominating personally, but oppressive messages can go out if you are not aware of *what and how* you are speaking.

When you talk in a dominant language, like English, there can be an oppressive tsunami behind you waiting to be activated. It can make people go into the inferiority role or join you in the superiority role. Whether or not it is activated and affects the people you are talking to depends on you.

It’s up to you [it depends on you] how to use the language in an elegant, non-oppressive way. We know that our intelligence is much bigger than any complication of the world, that it is possible to have solutions for everything. So you can change an oppressive language situation into a liberating language situation. If you are aware of the situation, you can do it. And remember, there is no such thing as an oppressor language. Only the way a language is used can be oppressive.

DISCHARGING ON YOUR LANGUAGE-OPPRESSION HISTORY

“Mental health” oppression stops us from crying and raging. It can stop us from discharging about the loss of a native language. If you lost an old native language and you cry about that, people might use oppressive expressions like, “Why are you crying for something you lost two generations ago? Don’t waste time on useless things.” “Are you okay?” “Please, cry for important things! You’re crazy!”

But you are not wasting time. You are investing time. If you discharge about the loss, you will reconnect with what was there before it.

Here is a possible direction for your next sessions: “I belonged to someone and to somewhere that now I do not remember, because oppression doesn’t want me to remember who I really am. I belong to a group of smart, free, good people who had a smart, free, intelligent, complete, natural, brilliant language . . . ,” or “I belong to a place”

Whenever we discharge, information that’s been waiting for us to re-evaluate will come to us and guide us around the world in a different way. When you discharge about a lost language, it will be easier to recognize which part of the world you belong to. Things will start to inform you about something that’s been closed and shut down all your life.

Suddenly one word of your original language will come out from your mouth, and something new will happen. You will be able to talk more easily about your history, your family’s history, your people, and things will change in a place where you have never seen a change.

Perhaps our mission is not to get the lost languages back but to bring back memories of who we were and introduce that to people: “Hey, these are my ancestors, and these were their languages.”

It’s not going to be fast or finished in ten years. Ten thousand years of oppression are not going to disappear in ten sessions.



ISLE OF ISLAY, SCOTLAND • WILLIAM M. LOVING

From a Young Ex-Psychiatric Inmate

I fought my way out of the “mental health” system and off of drugs by myself as a teenager, but I continued to carry heavy shame and confusion about that experience for years before learning RC as a young adult.

I remember hearing Janet Foner (the then International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation) speak at an International Liberation Reference Persons’ gather-in in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, a few years after I started Co-Counseling. I told her I was a fellow ex-inmate. She held me in her arms while I sobbed and discharged deep, early terror.

Confusion about “mental health” oppression and especially ex-inmates’ oppression runs deep in the wide world, and internalized “mental health” oppression often creates blocks that keep me from showing myself openly. But Janet exuded such total clarity—that people are good, that we have brilliant minds, that discharge is good, and that there is nothing wrong with any of us—that it created the safety that let me discharge with her without feeling pulled to hide.

When I went to my first ex-inmate workshop, I felt intense restimulation of distress recordings from my psychiatric inmate experience. During the first evening of the workshop, I was so terrified that I felt like I physically could not walk or move. I spent the workshop introductions lying on the ground and feeling like I had been hit by a bus.

Janet was totally unfazed and kept warmly reaching to pull me out of that deep restimulation and toward a warm, non-urgent, non-worried human connection that changed the way I have related to my ex-inmate experience ever since. She held out that ex-psychiatric inmates are freedom fighters: that the oppressive society targets us for showing ourselves as humans in ways that we are “not supposed to,” that it uses the “mental health” system to punish us as examples to the rest of the world of what happens if you don’t conform, and that continuing to show ourselves despite the repression inflicted upon us is an act of courage.

I learned that “mental health” oppression is an enforcement mechanism to uphold the irrational, destructive systems of racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, class oppression, young adults’ oppression, Gay oppression, and other oppressions by targeting people who “break the rules” by not successfully assimilating into the norms of the oppressor group.

Anonymous
USA

■■■■■■■■■■ The Pandemic, and Women in Construction ■■■■■■■■■■

The following is a conversation between two women who work in construction in the United States in the time of COVID-19. One works in the field, having just graduated from her apprenticeship, and the other is a union leader for a building trades union.

“Mary Francis Carpenter”: Hi, “Kathleen.” Let’s start by sharing what you do for work.

“Kathleen Fitzgerald”: I am a journeyman operating engineer. I run heavy equipment, like excavators, bobcats, loaders, and paving equipment on big construction jobs.

M—: I know you were working on a seven-day-a-week job leading up and into the coronavirus pandemic. What was it like for you on



MACHU PICCHU, PERU • DIANE SHISK

the job as a female as the virus was ramping up [intensifying]?

K—: It was a struggle to think about staying on the job—it seemed to be about whether I was “tough enough.” It was exciting to trust my mind and decide that my body matters and my health matters even if the sexism, class oppression, and men’s oppression around me said otherwise. Really, all of our bodies are so precious. But the oppression makes it so hard to act like that’s true.

K—: How would you describe the work that you do?

M—: I’m a union organizer for one of the building trades unions. I do a lot of things. I started in my apprenticeship thirty years ago, worked in the field doing a lot of heavy concrete form work (roads and bridges), and have worked for my union in various roles for about twenty years. Right now, a lot of my work is getting more women into these good union careers, with a priority of opening these doors to women of color.

K—: What has it been like to be a woman during COVID-19? What has it been like to lead women?

M—: It’s been hard. Some government officials have shown real leadership and have shut down construction in some areas, but most are still calling it “essential.” There are several problems with this:

1) Many construction projects are *not* essential in the time of a pandemic (like building luxury apartments, sports stadiums, or even school buildings).

2) For the jobsites that are open (whether or not they should be), there is little ability to enforce following the COVID-19 safety requirements, like social distancing and frequent hand washing. For example, we generally have no access to running water at construction sites, and jobsites clearly don’t have enough hand sanitizer given the shortage. And there’s the question of masks: All masks should be going to healthcare workers. In fact, the workers, contractors, and unions in our area have gathered masks from our basements, jobsites, and training centers to donate to nurses, but that leaves construction workers without masks.

All the above means to me that jobsites should be shut down except for a small number—for example, sites with hospital work related to the virus or for keeping the water, sewer, and lights working in the community. And even those projects should be shut down until we can ensure safety for the workers.

We (construction unions) are actually good at safety training and implementation for hazardous conditions (like hazardous materials training and work rules), but the COVID-19 trainings haven’t been well developed yet. As a result, the industry is just sending people to work based on someone’s idea of what safety might look like. It’s not driven by actual data and knowing something for sure (there is ongoing discussion of how far the virus can travel in the air).

We are being told we are essential but are being treated like we’re expendable.

Also, let's be real. The only reason so much construction has been going on is because the lobbyists for construction companies and developers are strong—they are pushing elected officials hard to keep construction going. There is about six billion dollars' worth of construction in my state.

As a female, I feel like I can see all this, but I am still struggling with how to talk to and listen to the men (because that's who is in charge in my union) about it in a way that makes good things happen that are outside of men's oppression and working-class oppression. At times I feel like my skills at connecting and listening are being useful, and other times I feel useless. I try to keep discharging and keeping my attention out.

K—: The conditions are similar for me and my friends. We have been told repeatedly to wash our hands, but many of our jobsites have no running water. My friends who are mothers struggled enormously in the first days to find childcare and then struggled again when childcare centers were set up but only for hospital workers. Some of us have been told we can take a layoff without consequences. But as women we are concerned about looking "weak" or calling attention to our femaleness. Some of us have had good conversations about deciding it is strong and courageous to safeguard health. Others of us feel so marginal and threatened in the industry to begin with that we do not trust there will be jobs for us once it is safe to return to work.

After a lot of discharge, I decided to request a layoff from my job. My re-evaluation was that "even if it is barely noticed, deciding to leave is an important piece of leadership."

K—: How does COVID-19 impact the women's liberation work for the women you lead? What are things looking like to you as we go forward?

M—: I've heard from a lot of tradeswomen who are struggling with the same things you describe. So, I've been figuring out ways to counsel women and/or get the perspective out to stay home. Once women are home, it's about finding ways to offer connection with each other via online women's committee meetings. I now have eight women's committees in the region I cover. I've led a number of Zoom calls in April with tradeswomen leaders on ways we can offer connection to women during this time.

Another challenge is that in construction we earn our health insurance by the number of hours we work. I hope to have conversations with my union about whether we can extend people's health insurance during this time, or lower the hours needed to qualify.

I want to be part of establishing safety standards for jobsites that are open. However, I'm not sure I will be able to enter those conversations because my position in

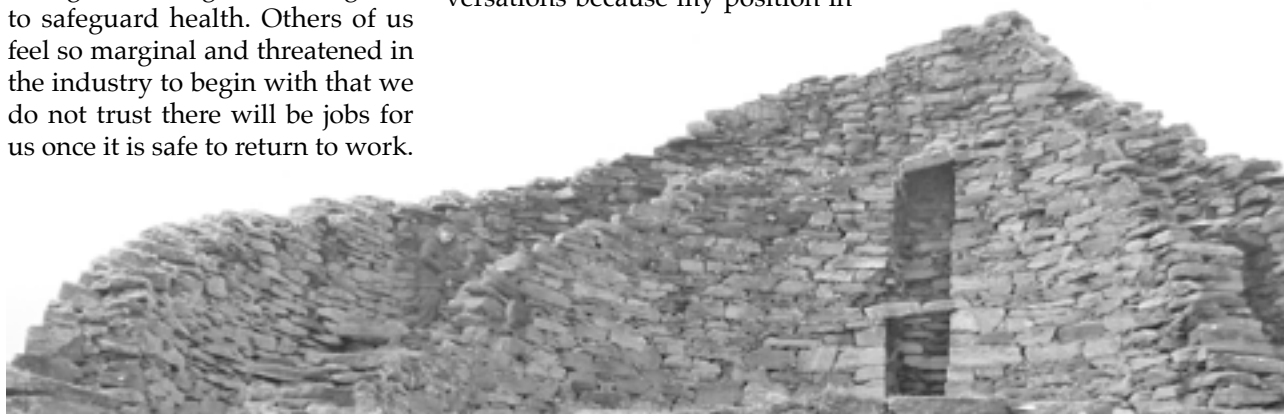
the union is not tied to that, and the conversations so far have been fairly "closed-door."

As women, we are often last-hired, first laid off. We are thinking about helping tradeswomen be ready for when work opens up again. We've made great progress over the last ten years in increasing the number of women in the trades in our area and are thinking about concrete ways we can maintain that momentum. We hold monthly meetings on meeting workforce goals for women and people of color.

M—: How about your organizing for tradeswomen in your area?

K—: Well, in the short term we are thinking about giving everyone the space to decide whether or not to continue to work and what conditions to advocate for if we decide to work. I have felt grateful for the strong connections I've made with women in different trades. Our relationships have helped us to stay in contact and think together through this crisis. We are also helping one another to think through how to advocate for ourselves in our male-dominated unions. "I've been quiet about a lot of things (as a woman) but this is too much" is a perspective I have heard a lot. A lot of us are angry. In some ways the situation has brought us together.

continued . . .



DUN CARLOWAY, ISLE OF LEWIS, SCOTLAND • BESS HERBERT

LIBERATION

... continued

M—: Do you see opportunities for women to lead the men here?

K—: Yes. I think the stakes are high enough that many of us are doubting our thinking less than we usually do. There is an opportunity there. The struggle is to do enough discharging that we can communicate our care and intelligence in a way in which the men might actually follow.

K—: Do you see opportunities like this?

M—: To be honest—theoretically yes; but in practice, not yet. I listened to one of my key male union leaders last week, and good things came out of it. In a later call with that same leader he was cranky and irritated, and he recommended things that didn't make sense to me. I think our leaders (in all arenas) are super stressed.

M—: What directions are being useful to you right now as a female construction worker in the time of COVID?

K—: "Your life matters to me." "Your intelligence as a woman really matters here." I've been laughing a lot at the humor on the Internet about how yesterday we were "scumbags and drunks" and today we are "essential."

K—: What directions have been useful for you?

M—: Working on early distress in session, and out of session trying to get my attention *off* myself and my distress. Remembering that connection matters and that if I can't tell [see] that it does, that must be distress. Remembering that I am deeply connected to a large institution (my union) that has an opportunity to play a positive role. And

setting up more time for discharge than I seem to want to.

M—: What are one or two things you find hopeful in construction right now?

K—: Even on a good day our jobs are dangerous, so we are skilled at recognizing hazards and staying relaxed and resolving them. COVID-19 can be regarded as a new hazard for which we need to create protocols. Also, many of us are getting to notice in a big way how classism affects us and how we are expected to put our bodies on the line in order to create wealth. Open discussion about whether we are "essential" or "expendable" has been really productive.

K—: What have you noticed that has been hopeful?

M—: A group of tradespeople, including some key rank-and-file women, became organized and got the mayor of New York City (New York, USA) to change the construction order from "all construction open" to more precisely defining essential construction and shutting down all other sites. There have been wildcat [worker-led] strikes around the country in which tradespeople have been walking off jobs that aren't essential and don't have safety measures in place. A mayor (formerly a working-class laborer) in Boston (Massachusetts, USA) stood up to [confronted and opposed] the owning-class governor and is keeping Boston jobsites closed. Tradeswomen have created Facebook pages to organize workers to fight to stay at home, and to offer encouragement and legal advice. Also, it's hopeful that you and I are doing this work together!

K—: I agree!

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



PROVENCE, FRANCE • PAMELA PERROTT

Being a Large, Tall, Strong Woman

I've been reminded that Diane [Diane Balsler, International Liberation Reference Person for Women] would like us to write. So here I am. The following is from notes taken after the women's workshop in the Netherlands in February 2020 (just before workshops were cancelled due to COVID-19).

It has been important for me to work on our sex as females—not on being female as an identity, but as a fact, and on how sexism hits us.

Being a large, tall, strong woman has been hard in how sexism hit me. As a girl in primary school I was the tallest. That was hard, since an early message for me as a girl was that men like women less tall than they are. Boys yelled at me: "big horse."

Being tall made me stand at the back of the row while doing gymnastics (that I loved so much!). When the things to jump over were too low for me, and since I was the only one left [remaining] to jump, the teacher didn't make an effort to make it higher for me only.

In secondary school I was yelled at by some girls in my class because I was the heaviest. Because of the restimulation I still remember that I weighed sixty-seven kilograms.

As a teenager it became clear to me that men liked me for having good talks with them but not as a woman to fall in love with. It appeared to me that men often chose women who were not so tall, not so large, but preferably tiny and blond.

I have long arms, long legs, and a large shoe size, which always made me leave shops disappointed and angry. Average female sizes were too small for my fully female body! (This is getting better, actually.)

I heard messages about some female athletes having "too much" testosterone and being prevented from continuing with their sports.

Diane worked with me on the question, "Ain't I a woman?" Later I wondered where this question came from. I found it on the Internet. "Ain't I a woman?" is from the speech of Sojourner Truth in 1851, in Ohio, USA. That speech makes me cry. It shows how intertwined and mean racism and sexism are. It strikes [impacts] me as a tall woman with muscles. And also, as a woman who grew up on a farm where we worked together doing everything that needed to be done. We didn't wear make-up. Nice clothes only on Sunday. When I was little, we wore wooden shoes during the week.

Sojourner Truth's speech in 1851, Ohio:

". . . Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter [something wrong]. I think that 'twixt [between] the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix [in trouble] pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? . . . "

That's it for now.

"Blackbird"

The Netherlands

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



COVID-19, as Females



Dear sisters,

The following are some things to think about and work on during the COVID-19 crisis:

In all class societies we females have been expected to sacrifice ourselves (our lives, our autonomy, our bodies). There is an expectation that others come first, that we are the caretakers, that our lives don't really matter, that we are responsible for the well-being of all other humans. Can you think of some examples of this in our present situation?

Even when there is no overt, public, or major crisis, women's issues have most often been trivialized. During a major crisis (like today's) the issues are perceived as nonexistent or immaterial.

What is happening with women's issues during COVID-19? What is happening in terms of sexual violence, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, reproductive issues, low-paid jobs, unpaid work, child-raising, relationships with men, and so on?

Domestic violence (often invisible to the public and the fears of it often denied) is already a big epidemic. According to the World Health Organization, one in three women worldwide is a victim of physical or sexual violence. Reports from China suggest that COVID-19 significantly increased domestic violence.

I was horrified, particularly as an older female, to learn that in Italy and China, older patients (mostly

women) would be less likely to get ventilators than younger patients (and therefore be more likely to die).

Let's discharge on how COVID-19 and the societal policies surrounding it are affecting us as *females*. How are you experiencing sexism and male domination at this time?

I encourage you to connect with other women and work on the issues raised in this e-mail. You can write to me at dibals@comcast.net if you have questions or need help.

Diane Balser
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

“Disappearing,” as a Female

I feel embarrassed to write about this struggle, but as Diane [Diane Balser, International Liberation Reference Person for Women] tells us, none of our issues as females are trivial, and it's important we put attention on all of our struggles.

I'm a thin female. I'm noticing that I am having trouble taking time to eat. This was an issue before this pandemic, but it's even more pronounced now, to the point that when I stand up, I start to get faint. I will work on the computer without breaks and schedule every part of my day to the point that I will go for long periods without food. I am losing weight because of it.

A few years ago, I was in the grocery store and it suddenly occurred to me just how much my struggle with food and overwork was connected to sexism. I saw the images on the magazines of very thin women with little clothing on. I thought, “Oh no, I'm disappearing myself.” It feels like society doesn't want us to exist, to take up space. I have been conditioned and trained to disappear as a female.

Society has targeted girl children for annihilation, and not just in places where the aborting of female fetuses is more prevalent. Both in the United States and in other Global North countries it can be normal to prefer having a boy. This is framed casually, but it does speak to the devaluing of our bodies and lives as females. It is not small.

“B.L.”
USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

Sheltering in Place with My Husband

Because of a teaching job, I had been living in a rented room an hour away from home for six months. I had been visiting my husband on the weekends. This break from daily sexism had been an unexpected, joyous, and liberating relief.

I am now “sheltering in place” with my husband in our home. We are living every moment together. Suddenly the sexism that has played out [been acted out] during our twenty-year marriage is even more glaringly evident—unequal cleaning, unequal space sharing in our small one-bedroom apartment, unaware dismissals of my mind, sexist music and movies, and so on. I am now naming the sexism daily, and daily fights are happening.

I have usually accommodated him and gotten a session from someone else on my early experiences of sexism with my brothers and father. The fact that we cannot leave the apartment forces me to stay and fight. I still have remote sessions in the other room, but it’s hard for me to keep them private. He is also a Co-Counselor. We have been having messy sessions about sexism, but it is hard for both of us to stay counselor for very long. I have been requiring that he be my ally against sexism and that we work together.

I’ve been looking at what has kept me from fighting for my right to have some space in the apartment for myself and expecting him to share equally in the housework. It has to do with my fear of hurting (restimulating) him, not wanting to be a “nag,” and early resignation and discouragement about being disrespected as a raised-poor female of the Global Majority (he is upper-middle/owning class and white).

In many ways we have a good, strong relationship. People compliment us on it and say they wish they had a marriage like ours. This makes it hard to admit to the struggles we are having. Also, because my husband is a Co-Counselor and clearly a good man to most anyone who knows him, it has been almost impossible to show or share my domestic struggles. I feel that I would be discredited.

I heard Diane Shisk [the Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities] say, “We love our sexist men.” This has helped me in the daily fights. I have decided not to keep silently resenting him but instead face the ex-

haustion and restimulation of naming the oppression as it comes and not going “underground.” As I commit to doing this, I am surprised to notice how much sexism had been coming at me for all these years and how I kept accepting it like the air I breathe. I am curious where this will lead if I discharge my early victimization and low self-confidence.

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

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Calling Out Sexism at Home

Dear sisters,

I have so much privilege as a middle-class female who is not a parent. Yet the daily sexism I live with in my home as a woman married to a male is exhausting. I chose a “good one,” and yet it is still hard. Fortunately, both my single and partnered Co-Counselors don’t get confused about me or him or our relationship while they help me face the sexism.

Building a life with someone who has been systematically trained to discount my thoughts, words, and actions, and who acts out those recordings in spite of his best efforts, is brutal. It makes me discount my own thinking. It restimulates early loneliness and boredom that are linked to internalized sexism and early defeat. Also, the sexism restimulates how no one acknowledged my mind when I was a child. I was ridiculed and dismissed as a girl but rewarded for being cute and well-behaved. (Thankfully my husband doesn’t act out needing me to be proper or pretty.) I often find myself thinking, “You have no idea who I am,” which is also

a recording from my childhood. I have to discharge on early hurts and on present-day interactions so that I can keep thinking and trying new things.

I’ve had some successes. The phrase “sexism and male domination” is said often in our home. I name it when it comes from him and when we see it on television. He now does the same. Sometimes, after I point out that he has interrupted me, he’ll shout, “Sexism and male domination!” We laugh. I’ll sometimes ask, “Why do you talk to me like that when I’m your favorite person on this earth?” We both know it’s because of patterns of male domination, reinforced by society, that he hasn’t been able to shed. Having this mutual understanding is helpful, but things are still hard.

Our different responses to caretaking our parents during the pandemic have been interesting. They have everything to do with sexism. We both assume that I will take care of my parents and that his sister will take care of his. He does not want to get sick and feels no obligation

to expose himself. If I get sick, he’ll take care of me, but that’s the extent to which he’s willing to sacrifice.

What if I could take a stand like that? What if I could put my health first? But do so while being connected and loving? I have been discharging on not taking care of my parents if they fall ill [become ill], something that is not instinctual and feels terrible as a female Catholic. In session, I’ve been saying things like, “If you need to go to the hospital, dial 911.” I’ve had several sessions weeping about it. It’s also made me realize that I need to discharge more about caretaking my brother when he was terminally ill and then handling so much after he took his life. It took a big toll on my mind. Facing that is good and hard. A Co-Counselor gave me a direction the other day, which I’m still working on: “Mom and Dad, I’m going to sit this one out” [not do anything to help you this time].

“Genevieve Jabour”

USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



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The following four articles are reports on the Women's and Men's Leaders' Workshop for West Coast North America led by Diane Balser, International Liberation Reference Person for Women; and Tim Jackins, International Reference Person for the RC Communities.

The Women's and Men's Leaders' Workshop

I participated in the one-day Women's and Men's Leaders' Workshop led by Diane Balser [International Liberation Reference Person for Women] and Tim Jackins [International Reference Person] for West Coast North America. Women and men met separately with their respective leaders the first half of the workshop. We met together the second half, with Diane and Tim each leading a class.

Diane reminded us that women's oppression is big and that in the current society it has been minimized and made invisible.

For me, sexism is intertwined with racism. The early material [distress] makes me feel rigidly protective of the behavior of Black men and like apologizing to them when I try to work on sexism.

I live with an undercurrent of fear and worry because of the fear and worry about survival we experienced in my family. We are African heritage. We were poor small farmers during the time of segregation. The early worry and caretaking patterns have pulled me away from prioritizing myself, my body, and my health during the pandemic. I've decided to prioritize myself more as I go forward.

From Tim: "How can we go forward together as a unified front even though the material is not yet resolved? What agreements do we need? Each of us has to take responsibility for the distresses that have been pushed on us and not blame and hang our upsets on others."

Marion Ouphouet

Seattle, Washington, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members

Untangling Racism and Being Female

I attended the Women's and Men's Leaders' Workshop [see previous article]. For years I have struggled to "want" to attend women's workshops. I have an early memory of my mother. She was becoming more politically active in the Asian American community and wanted to share her ideas with the women's movement of the early 1970s. She came home from a women's meeting disappointed and angry because no one (in the primarily white female group) would listen to her ideas.

At the time I was oppressed by racism in a mostly white high school, and I just wanted to know that life gets better as you get older. To see my mother struggle with racism in the same way I struggled was devastating. I've had to discharge on the disappointment and hopelessness to be able to attend women's workshops. Racism and being female are still intertwined for me, and I continue to untangle the two.

Sexism can make us silent. I've had to decide not to be silent. This is my first post to the women's list. As I discharge on not being silent, I notice that racism can get in the way of my noticing that I have thinking. I've recalled RC workshops at which People of the Global Majority were encouraged to be the first ones to say their thoughts or ask questions and my mind going blank. I've interpreted this to mean that I don't actually have any questions or thoughts. But now I have to ask myself, "Where am I scared? What do I need to discharge to know my own mind?"

I think of my two-year-old grandchild who always has something to say, even if it's unrelated to the topic at hand [being discussed]. I'm glad to have this as a guide, as something that shows me that human beings naturally have their minds and want to share their thinking.

Sue Yoshiwara

Albany, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



Keeping My Attention on My Battles against Sexism

I organized the recent West Coast North America Women's and Men's Leaders' Workshop that Diane Balser [International Liberation Reference Person for Women] and Tim Jackins [International Reference Person for the RC Communities] led. The workshop was originally supposed to be a three-day workshop in person, but due to the current pandemic, it was a one-day workshop over Zoom. One hundred and thirty-four people attended. A little more than two thirds of the participants were women, and a little less than one third were men. It was a big organizing job and a very different job doing it over Zoom. It was incredibly useful to have a big technology team led by Chris Selig that facilitated the technology running smoothly and allowed the rest of the workshop to go well.

Diane led a class just for women in the morning. She asked us to work on what it is like to prioritize ourselves as females during this particular time. She reminded us that during crises, like war and the current pandemic, we women are asked to sacrifice ourselves to ensure the survival of others, the species, and our culture. She emphasized the brutality of sexism while also drawing our attention to the fact that it is systematically trivialized. Both of these make it hard to put our minds on it and discharge regularly on it. Diane reminded us that, internationally, domestic violence and sexual exploitation go up during times of crisis, including right now. She also reminded us that the majority of those who are essential workers right now are women, because women do the majority of the

work that is about taking care of people and sustaining humanity. Diane counseled women on these issues.

In the afternoon class Diane led the women and the men. She pushed us as women to be vulnerable in our relationships with men and to communicate clearly the effects of sexism on our lives—not blame them for the effects but reach for them as our allies in the fight against sexism. She did a panel with several women on the effects of sexism on their early lives and also pushed them to communicate to men how sexism affects them now.

Tim then led a class for both women and men. He emphasized how one of the effects of oppression is that if we are not targeted by an oppression, we can't really understand it. We can and need to learn about it, and we also need to be aware of the fact that we won't ever really understand some things about it.

Despite people's unawareness of our oppression and their op-



KATIE KAUFFMAN

pressor material, we can still reach for them as our allies. We can teach them about how their oppressor material [distress] or other things affect us and have affected us. For example, women can tell men how their sexism affects them as women, and men can tell women how men's oppression affects them as men. In order to do this effectively, we cannot get lost in our restimulations about the oppression. We have to remember that we are reaching for the other human's mind.

We also can't wait to resolve all of the oppression issues before we try to work together as a united front to change society. It will not work to bury the effects of oppression, but it also won't work to remain divided, unaware, and blaming each other for the effects of the oppression. We need to assume every human is our ally, regardless of where they have been hurt into acting out oppressor material. But we do need to push them to understand how their oppressor material affects us or how a particular oppression has hurt us.

A personal highlight was getting to work so systematically on how sexism has affected me as a female. One effect has been to be preoccupied with other people's feelings and take care of those feelings, so much so that I often can't put attention on myself. I was able to work on this. A benefit of being on Zoom was that I could notice how much I am distracted at in-person workshops by other people's sessions. In this context, I was much more able to keep my attention focused squarely on my own battles against sexism.

Micaela Morse

Oakland, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women

Being Female During COVID-19

In April I attended the one-day Women's and Men's Leaders' Workshop led by Diane Balsler [International Liberation Reference Person for Women] and Tim Jackins [International Reference Person] for the west coast of North America. It was an opportunity for me to think and discharge about sexism during COVID-19.

Diane pointed out that women are the majority of the essential workers and that our attention goes to being caretakers when society is in crisis. She asked us to notice the struggle to prioritize ourselves as females during COVID-19. Two questions stand out: How is sexism affecting your life during COVID-19? Are you quiet about it?

During COVID-19 statewide stay-at-home orders, I chose to shelter in place with my Cuban American father, who is in his eighties, and with my niece, in order to protect my dad from the disease and also to not live alone during the pandemic. It's been an interesting challenge to set things up to go well for me as I assume new shared responsibilities for cooking, cleaning, listening, and shopping safely for groceries for a household.

Diane worked with a woman on early memories of caretaking. She asked the woman if she had been expected to take care of someone at her own expense. That question has helped me get my mind engaged around taking care of others as a female. When is my caring for someone enhancing my experience of being alive and contributing to the well-being of my family and community, and when is it being done at my own expense? Can I tell [perceive] where the border line is? Can I counsel, take a stand, and do something differently when I am going toward caring for someone at my own expense?

Diane talked about our struggles to challenge sexism in our lives. Women feel like they have two choices—scream and attack men for their sexism or go silent. In Co-Counseling we are aiming to have our voices as females and also reach men as men. We can expect to have men as our allies, which Diane said will mean taking the initiative to be vulnerable and show men how we got hurt.

Tim talked about how men don't understand the effect of sexism on women, and women don't understand the effect of men's oppression on men. Men need to be informed about sexism without blame or upset being aimed at them.



MURAL IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • SUE EDWARDS

During and since the workshop I have counseled on how sharing my experiences of sexism restimulates early humiliation. Restimulated humiliation ends up enforcing my silence; I go quiet and let opportunities to share an experience of sexism go by.

The week after the workshop I felt empowered to take on the early restimulated humiliation and see it for what it is—something that happened in the past. My dad and I were eating breakfast and looking at the day's COVID-19 news on television. There was a news story about violence toward women. My dad made a comment that revealed he thought this was something that happened to just a few women. He seemed not to know how widespread sexism and male domination can be. I took a deep breath and made a decision to share with him my story of having been wrestled to the ground by my boss's boss at my workplace when I was a junior in college. My dad's eyes grew huge. He was surprised to learn that something like that could happen to his own daughter in a college workplace setting. It had taken me thirty-five years to share this story with him. I felt the early humiliation being restimulated as I talked about the experience. But now I could take a stand and choose to stay in the present and be open and vulnerable with my dad. I stayed anchored by remembering the faces at the workshop and thinking of my sisters who also are trying to take risks by reaching for openness and vulnerability with the men in their lives.

Later that night my niece and I were having dinner and the conversation turned to the workshop. I shared some of what I had learned and was thinking about. She shared a personal experience and I shared my college story. Again, I took a stand in my mind for openness and vulnerability, this time with a young adult woman. We had a conversation about challenging the feelings of past humiliation so as not to go silent. I could feel our connection and our sisterhood deepening. Later she texted me her appreciation for our conversation and our

continued . . .



YUKO HIBINO

... continued

shared commitment to ending sexism and male domination while reaching for men as allies.

I am grateful for this workshop—I am thinking more actively and with more awareness as I move forward as a Catholic, Latina, and female during COVID-19. A big thank you to Diane and Tim for your leadership, to Micaela Morse [Area Reference Person for East Oakland, California, USA] for organizing given the complexity of a Zoom workshop, and to all the people who supported with tech and other jobs. I am hopeful about the ways we as Co-Counselors can lead and be a force for good in the world during this time.

“Maria Puentes”
USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members

Ramadan, and Discharging on My Hindu Heritage

Ramadan begins this week. I asked someone in our RC class, a practicing Muslim, to talk about Ramadan and what it means to them. Then we discharged on early memories connected to our religious heritages.

It was moving. I noticed my connection to others in the class deepen. It felt powerful, and I felt something shift for me.

I don’t often fully show what I think and feel as a Hindu. I get scared and angry about how Hinduism has been used in deeply oppressive ways to separate Hindus and Muslims.

I discharged on my memories of connection as a Hindu girl. Some of my most cherished childhood times were gathering with my family and community to celebrate Hindu holidays or be together during *poojas* [prayers]. Our work in class reminded me how good it is to openly show my love for Hinduism, which is connected to my desire for the complete liberation of all people, and, as part of that, to completely back Muslim liberation. An RC teacher once said, the [rational] needs of a group are not in conflict with the [rational] needs of an individual.

Anu Yadav

North Hollywood, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people



A Great Commonality

Intelligence is the great unifying characteristic that we share. We have a mind, operating out of a central nervous system that can assume more positions than there are atoms in the known universe (which is a very, very large number). We process eleven trillion items of information a second without making any effort. This is the great commonality among us.

Harvey Jackins

From page 150 of “Advanced Re-emergence,” in *A Better World*

Men, How Are You Doing?

Hello Men,

I am not receiving much from this e-mail discussion list [for leaders of men]. I am wondering if it is because we are struggling with all that is going on in the world now. How are you doing? Can you feel or notice any struggle?

It can be hard for us to feel anything or notice that we are struggling.

The quarantine is not much different than the isolation that many of us always live with.

It is always hard for me to tell [perceive] that anything is hard. I have to ask my spouse how I am doing. She is more likely to know my mental and emotional state than I am.

I like having our struggles exposed and talked about. It is helpful to me.

Here is the spoken prelude to a song, "Somewhere North of Nashville," by Bruce Springsteen, a U.S. working-class rock star, from one of his video albums. It has been helpful to me and breaks my feelings of isolation. He is good at talking about what it is like being a man.

"I wrote this song quickly at the kitchen table one morning. It's just about being lost on the highway of life. Lost is something I'm good at writing about. Sometimes you've been too beat up, or haven't healed enough of the fear out of you, to know a good thing when you've found it. Sometimes you just gravitate to the pain. It's what you're used to. It's how you recognize yourself. It feels like home. It feels more familiar to you than love. So that's where you go. You don't know how to hold on to love, but you know how to hold on to hurt."

What can you notice?



Dan Nickerson
Freeport, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of men

Discharging More While Quarantined

Dear Dan,

I appreciate your e-mail and the questions you pose [see article above]. Thanks for putting this issue out and asking us men to respond.

I've decided to use the COVID-19 situation as an opportunity. It is clear that my feelings are closer to the surface than they are in "normal" times. I also have more unscheduled time available as I'm quarantined at home. I've decided to have lots and lots of mostly phone sessions (some are visual) and keep my focus on the earliest distresses and work consistently on them. Deciding and staying committed to doing this seem to be key. It's been "hard," challenging work, but I feel like I'm making progress. My mind is both coming up with [accessing] new memories and also making more links between the various old distresses. Paying attention to the

thoughts that come into my head as I'm clienting seems key in unraveling where and how the hurts "settled into" my mind. Most days, I'm getting between one and two hours of discharge, which is much more than my normal discharge routine.

Avi Gladstone
Hadley, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of men



Trabajo de liberación de los hombres en Euskal Herria-País Vasco

El mes de diciembre de 2019 tuvimos el taller para hombres en nuestra Región RC de Euskal Herria-País Vasco. Desde hace treinta años tenemos un taller anual sobre la liberación de los hombres, todos liderados por Xabier Odriozola, persona de referencia regional de RC.

HISTORIA DE ESTE TRABAJO

Elaboramos una tabla en la que cada uno escribió en qué año fue su primer taller regional de hombres. Gracias a ese ejercicio pudimos tener una perspectiva sobre la variedad de experiencia en RC-liberación masculina dentro de nuestro grupo. También tomamos conciencia de que el taller que ahora está sucediendo es la consecuencia de unas relaciones y de un trabajo sistemático y constante durante treinta años.

RED DE APOYO DE HOMBRES ENTRE TALLERES ANUALES

Xabi nos volvió a proponer en 2018, en el taller de hombres, formar cinco grupos de apoyo con un líder experimentado y tres hombres para reunirse cuatro veces durante el año fuera del taller (una vez en invierno-primavera-verano-otoño), antes de llegar al taller de 2019. En el taller del 2017 hicimos eso mismo, formando también cinco grupos de apoyo que se reunieron hasta el taller anual siguiente en 2018. Esta red permite a los hombres que participaron en el taller estar conectados directamente con otros hombres a lo largo del año, y así llegar al siguiente taller con esa conexión, lo cual facilita mucho el trabajo grupal durante el taller (ya que llegamos a él con mucha menos desconexión). De este modo

hemos tenido, al menos, 4 grupos de apoyo, y hemos mantenido relación con los compañeros con los que hiciste una relación tan especial y cercana durante el taller anterior.



CYNTHIA JOHNSTON

BASÁNDONOS EN EL TRABAJO EN GRUPOS

Durante el primer día de taller nos juntamos en los grupos de apoyo formados en 2018, con el que ya hemos tenido relación directa a lo largo del año. El segundo día formamos nuevos grupos de apoyo con un nuevos líderes, y estos serían nuestros grupos a lo largo de 2020 hasta el siguiente taller en 2021.

En total durante los dos días de taller nos reunimos al menos diez veces en grupos de apoyo, además de dos sesiones en pareja. Aparte de esto, los líderes de los grupos de apoyo nos reunimos en los desayunos y en la cena con Xabi. En esas reuniones nos transmitió su visión, hizo algunas propuestas, y nos escuchó sobre nuestro trabajo. Nosotros le transmitimos cómo veíamos que estaba yendo el taller. Él destacó la importancia que tenía nuestro papel como líderes, ya que nosotros éramos los encargados de conducir a los miembros de nuestros grupos a trabajar sobre esos temas que él

planteaba en las clases del taller. De otro modo, el taller perdería poder y efectividad, ya que la tendencia habitual es a no querer trabajar sobre temas incómodos y en donde nos sentimos confusos y perdidos. Y precisamente esos temas son los que más nos harán avanzar, individualmente y como grupo.

LAS DEMOSTRACIONES Y GRUPOS DE APOYO SON LA ESTRUCTURA DEL TALLER

El taller consistió en presentar ideas clave de la opresión de los hombres por medio de demostraciones con hombres diferentes y después ir a los grupos de apoyo. Cada demostración buscaba mostrar los ámbitos de influencia que han construido la versión opresiva de masculinidad.

Las demostraciones nos daban pistas prácticas sobre cómo trabajar personalmente en sesión cada uno de esos temas, y el grupo de apoyo nos daba un espacio para trabajarlo.

Dos de los ámbitos más complicados de la opresión de los hombres fueron mostrados a través de dos paneles, participando cinco hombres en cada uno de ellos.

Como resultado tuvimos la ocasión de escuchar a todos los hombres del grupo, sobre un tema u otro, lo cual nos permitió entender que a todos los hombres nos afectan los mismos temas, aunque a cada uno lo hace de un modo particular. Esto nos aportó una perspectiva global de nuestro sexismo y de la versión opresiva de masculinidad impuesta en nosotros, así como de que nuestras dificultades individuales provienen de una misma raíz que compartimos como colectivo.

UNA CRECIENTE PARTICIPACIÓN DE HOMBRES

Debido a la opresión que sufrimos los hombres estamos especialmente afectados en las siguientes áreas: la represión de nuestros sentimientos y proceso de desahogo, las dificultades para crear y mantener relaciones cercanas y comprometidas, y el desánimo y la rendición en lo que respecta a luchar por nuestra propia liberación. Los talleres están diseñados teniendo en cuenta esta realidad. Busca mantenernos unidos, en contacto, no solos, desahogando, y con recursos prácticos concretos para hacer sesiones en torno a nuestra liberación como hombres.

Lo anterior explica porqué tenemos una Comunidad Regional de RC en la cual la mitad somos hombres. La estructura del taller ha funcionado, de hecho, estamos creciendo en número. Nuevos hombres se han unido a las Comunidades de RC porque han tenido a un hombre y a un grupo de apoyo de su confianza, que les ha acompañado de manera cercana en su proceso. Gracias a estos talleres, pueden ampliar su base de hombres y recursos de confianza.

Juan Manuel Feito Guerrero
Bilbo, Bizkaia, Euskal Herria-País Vasco



BIRMINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM • ROB VENDERBOS

Euskal Herriko gizonen askapen lana

2019ko abenduan Euskal Herriko EB Lurraldeko Gizon Lantegia egin genuen. Azken 30 urtean, urtero egin dugu gizonen askapenerako lantegi bat. Lantegi guztiak EBko gure Lurralde Erreferentzi Pertsona Xabi Odriozolak gidatu ditu.

LAN HONEN INGURUKO HISTORIA

Taula batean, gutako bakoitzak idatzi zuen zein urtetan hartu zuen parte estrainekoz gizonentzako lurralde lantegian. Honek bide eman zigun ohar gintezen EBko gizonen askapenerako eskarmentua oso anitza dela gure taldean, alde batetik; eta bestetik, kontura gintezen orain gertatzen ari den hau 30 urtean zehar egindako lan eta hartu-eman sistematikoen ondorioa dela.

LANTEGI ARTEKO EUSKARRI-SAREA GIZONENTZAT

2018an ere Xabik proposatu zigun bost laguntza-talde egitea. Talde bakoitzean eskarmentu handiko erakusle bat eta beste hiru gizon daude, eta lau aldiz bilduko ziren lantegi artean, urtarotan behin hain zuzen. Gauza bera egin genuen 2017an: bost gizon-talde osatu eta launa bilera egin hurrengo urteko lantegira arte. Honelako sare batek lantegiko gizonen bide ematen die elkarrekin konektatuta jarraitzeko urtean zehar eta, konexio honi esker, hurrengo lantegiko talde-lana errazago gertatzen da. Era honetan, urtean zehar gutxienez lau bider elkartu dira aurreko lantegian harreman berezi eta gertua egin duten gizonak.

LANTEGIAN, TALDEKAKO LANA OINARRI

Lantegiko lehendabiziko egunean, 2018ko lantegian osatutako eta urtean zehar elkarrekiko harremanean jardun genuen laguntza-talde

berberetan bildu ginen. Bigarren egunean laguntza-talde berriak egin genituen, erakusle berri banarekin. Laguntza-talde honetan jarraituko dugu 2020ko lantegia arte.

Lantegiko bi egunetan 10 bat aldiz bildu ginen laguntza-taldeetan eta, gainera, bikotekako bina saio izan genituen. Honez gain, laguntza-taldeetako erakusleak Xabirekin bildu ginen gosaldurdu eta bazkalorduetan. Bilera horietan, Xabik bere irizpide eta proposamenak eskaintzen zizkigun; entzuten gintuen gure lanari buruz; eta gure iritzia ematen genizkion lantegiaren garapenera buruz. Bilera hauetako gakoetako bat izan zen Xabik guri azaltzea gure erakusle-lana funtsezkoa zela lantegia egoki gauzatzeko, geuk gidatu behar baikenituen gure laguntza-taldeko kideak lan egitera arestian Xabik lantegiko eskola bakoitzean azaldutako gaiei buruz. Gure lanaren ezean lantegiak indarra eta eraginkortasuna galduko luke, zeren ohiko joera izaten baitugu ez joratu nahi izatea deserosoak egiten zaizkigun edo nahas-mahasean eta noragabe gabiltzan langai horiek. Eta gai hauek lantzea da, hain zuzen ere, talde zein norbanako gisa hoberen aurrera egitea ahalbidetuko gaituztenak.

ERAKUSTALDIK ETA LAGUNTZA-TALDEAK, LANTEGIAREN ARDATZ

Lantegiaren egitura ondokoa izan zen: aurrena, gizonen zapalkuntzaren ideia gakoak aurkeztea gizon ezberdinekiko erakustaldien bidez; eta gero, laguntza-taldeetara joatea. Erakustaldia bakoitzaren helburua zen gure maskulinitate zapaltzailearen eraikuntzan eragin zuzena zuten esparruak (12 esparru guztira) plazaratzea ereduak erakutsiz.

(Hurrengo orrialdean jarraitzen du)

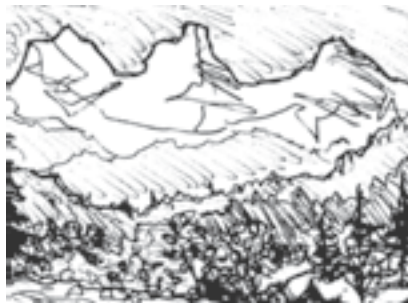
LIBERATION

(Aurreko orrialdeetik dator)

Erakustaldiok zertzelada praktikoak ematen zizkiguten gai hauek saioan lan egiteko balizko moduei buruz eta laguntza-taldeok horretarako abagunea.

Xabik gizonen zapalkuntzako bi esparru korapilatsuenetakoen eragina ekarri zigan bi panelen bidez. Panel bakoitzean bost gizonek hartu zuten parte.

Honela, gizon guztiak entzuteko parada izan genuen, gai batez edo beste batez ari zirela. Honek bide eman zigun ikusteko gai berberak eragiten digutela gizon guztioi, nahiz eta norberarengan modu pertsonalean ispilatu. Modu honetan, perspektiba orokorra lortu genuen ezarri diguten maskulinitate eredu zapaltzaileari eta barneratua dugun sexismoari buruz; alegia, norberaren zailtasunak gure kolektibo osoari dagokion erro bereetatik datozela.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

GIZONEZKOEN PARTE HARTZE GERO ETA HANDIAGO

Gizonok pairatzen dugun zapalkuntzak hainbat arlotan eragiten digu nagusiki: asaskatzea eta sentipenak eragozte, harreman gertuko eta konpromisozkoak eraikitze eta mantentzeko zailtasunak, gure askapenaren alde egiteko orduan adore gabezia eta etsipena. Lantegi hau, aurreko biak bezalaxe, errealitatea hau kontua hartua diseinatua da eta

bere helburuetako batzuk izan ditu gizonok bat eginda egotea, ez bakarrik, eta baliabideak eskura izatea gure gizon-askapenaren inguruan saioak egiteko.

Honek ondo azaltzen du zergatik gure lurraldean erkideetako erdia gizonezkoak garen. Lantegi hauen egiturak emaitza onak ematen dituela frogatua dago; areago, kopuruz ere gero eta gehiago gara. Erkidegoan gizon berriak ditugu gurekin, beren alboan konfiantzazko gizonezko bat eta laguntza-talde bat izan dituztelak eta, honela, beraien prozesuan lagunduta sentitu dira. Era berean, lantegi hauei esker bere erreferentziazko eta konfiantzazko gizonezko gehiago ezagutzen dituzte.

Juan Manuel Feito Guerrero
Bilbo, Bizkaia, Euskal Herria
Euskerara itzultzailea: Iñaki Kasares

English translation of the preceding article:

Men's Liberation Work in the Basque Country

In December 2019 we held our annual men's workshop for the Euskal Herria/Basque Country Region. For thirty years we have held this annual workshop on the liberation of men, led by Xabier Odriozola, the Regional Reference Person for Euskal Herria/Basque Country.

HISTORY OF THIS WORK

We made a chart on which each man wrote the year that he first attended the annual Regional men's workshop. Thanks to this exercise, we were able to have perspective on the variety of men's RC liberation experience in our group. We were also made aware that the current workshop was the consequence of the relationships and system-

atic and constant work over thirty years.

SUPPORT BETWEEN ANNUAL WORKSHOPS

During the 2018 men's workshop Xabi proposed (again) that the men form five support groups consisting of an experienced leader and three men, and that these groups meet four times—in winter, spring, summer, and autumn—prior to the 2019 workshop. We did the same thing at the 2017 workshop—forming five support groups that met until the 2018 workshop.

Men who participate in a workshop can thus be directly connected with other men throughout the year and can arrive at the next workshop

with that connection, which makes the workshop group work much easier (since we arrive with much less disconnection). At least four support groups have met between annual workshops. Men can maintain relationships with those with whom they had a special and close connection during the previous workshop.

GROUP WORK AS A BASIS

During the first day of the 2019 workshop we met in the support groups that had formed in 2018 and had met throughout the year. On the second day we formed new support groups with new leaders, and these were to be our groups throughout 2020 until the 2021 workshop.

During the workshop we met at least ten times in support groups as well as two times in paired Co-Counseling sessions. The support group leaders met with Xabi during breakfast and dinner. He shared his perspectives, made proposals, and listened to us about our work. We shared how we saw the workshop going. He emphasized the importance of our leadership role—that we led our group members to work on the issues he raised in the workshop classes. Without this, the workshop would lose power and effectiveness, since the usual tendency is to avoid uncomfortable topics and where we feel confused and lost. And it is precisely those topics that will make us advance the most, individually and as a group.

DEMONSTRATIONS AND SUPPORT GROUPS AS A WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The workshop consisted of presentations of the key ideas of men's oppression, by means of demonstrations with different men, followed by work in support groups. Each demonstration sought to show the influences that have constructed the oppressive version of masculinity.

The demonstrations gave us practical clues about how to work personally in sessions on each of the issues, and the support group gave us a space to work on it.

Two of the most complicated areas of men's oppression were demonstrated by means of panels,

and five men participated in each panel.

As a result, we had the opportunity to listen to all the men in the group on one topic or another. This allowed us to understand that all men are affected by the same issues, although each one is affected in a particular way. This gave us a global perspective on our sexism and the oppressive version of masculinity that had been imposed on us and how our individual difficulties come from the same root that we share as a collective.

INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF MEN

The oppression we men suffer especially affects the following areas: the repression of our feelings and the discharge process, the difficulties in creating and maintaining close and committed relationships, and our discouragement and surrender in terms of fighting for our own liberation. The workshops are designed with this reality in mind. They seek to keep us united, in contact, not alone, discharging, and with concrete practical resources for our sessions on our liberation as men.

The above explains why we have a Regional RC Community in which half of us are men. The workshop structure has worked; in fact, we are growing in number. New men have stayed in RC Communities because they have had a man and a support group they trust that have accompanied them closely in their process. Thanks to these workshops, they are able to broaden their base of trusted men and resources.

*Juan Manuel Feito Guerrero
Bilbao, Bizkaia, the Basque Country
Translated into English by
"Deepl" online service and
corrected by Juan Manuel Feito*



CHILE • DIANE SHISK

Please consider promoting, ordering, reading, and re-reading
Recovery and Re-emergence No. 6



“Mental health” liberation supports all liberation work. In this time of increasing challenges, we are increasingly seduced into numbness. In July 2019, in connection with the Climate Summit in New York (New York, USA), Janet Foner (then International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation) wrote, “[Psychiatric] drugs are not only physically damaging, they also make people quieter and less motivated to be activists.”

Tim Jackins reminds us we have a wealth of knowledge and experience at our fingertips in the already-published RC journals. *Recovery and Re-emergence*, the journal for “mental health” liberation, continues to be an incredible resource.

Issue No. 6 is entirely devoted to the issue of psychiatric drugs. Here are some of the topics that are covered: including people in RC who are taking psychiatric drugs, supporting people who want to stop taking these drugs, and supporting people who are affected by the “mental health” system in other ways (all of us). There are also examples of fighting the oppressions that lead people to choose (in desperation) to take these drugs.

Here are titles of some of the articles by Janet Foner: “Taking a Principled Stand on Psychiatric Drugs,” “What the RC Policy on Psychiatric Drugs Is Really About,” “RC Policy and Psychiatric Drugs,” and “More on Fundamentals Classes and Psychiatric Drugs.”

Here are titles of some of the articles by other RC leaders: “Children and Psychiatric Drugs,” by Jenny Sazama; “Going Public with the Psychiatric Drug Policy,” by Jo Saunders; “Why Are We Drugging Our Children?” by Julian Weissglass.

Anne Piche
Editor, *Recovery and Re-emergence*

\$3.00, plus postage and handling

**Have you read *Listening Effectively to Children?*
Ever? Lately? You may want to do that—or read it again!**



We have just reprinted *Listening Effectively to Children*, by Patty Wipfler (former International Liberation Reference Person for Parents). The information in it is valuable for both parents and non-parents, perhaps particularly during the challenges of COVID-19.

It can help parents think about how to use their extra time with their children to move the situation and their relationships forward. Many of us are having more feelings than usual these days—grief, fear, frustration, anger. Approaches to helping children discharge these feelings can be applied to adult clienting and counseling.

The chapter titles are “Special Time,” “Playlistening,” “Crying, Tantrums, and Indignation,” “Healing Children’s Fears,” and “Reaching for Your Angry Child.”

\$7.00, plus postage and handling

Ordering information on page 111 and at <www.rationalisland.com>

Organizing to Have a Decisive Impact

Dear people working on the climate emergency,

To end oppression, every group has to fight for their own liberation—pull together their constituency, identify and discharge on the oppression and internalized oppression, develop their program for liberation from oppression and put it out widely, organize people around it, win allies, go international. Harvey [Jackins] laid this out for us decades ago. RC has always had a strong commitment to ending oppression.

A GLOBAL THREAT TO EVERY CONSTITUENCY

Now there is a global threat to the survival of every constituency—the climate emergency. We have about ten years to get major policy changes agreed upon globally and implemented. (Yikes!) The RC Community has goals and an initiative aimed at stopping it.

We're not going to be able to end oppression in ten years, and we have to address the climate emergency now or we're all cooked. Fortunately, our most effective organizing for the climate has happened when we also tackle oppression, and especially racism, genocide, and classism. This has been the approach of Sustaining All Life (SAL) and United to End Racism (UER) in our climate work (though we are stronger on race and genocide than class).

I think it is part of every constituency's liberation to fight as that constituency for their survival. No constituency wants to leave their survival in the hands of their oppressors (or unaware allies) or have their future dictated by those patterns. It would seem to make sense

that every constituency organize itself both for its own liberation and to solve the climate emergency, to ensure its own survival.

Many constituency-based climate organizations are doing great work in the United States (and more are forming): Climate Justice Alliance and People's Climate Movement (People of the Global Majority), Indigenous Environmental Network and Idle No More (Native), Sunrise and Fridays for Future (young people), Ladauto Si' (Catholics), Dayenu (Jews), Mothers Out Front, Labor for Sustainability. Other constituency groups have added strong environmental goals to their broader platforms: the Poor People's Campaign, Black Lives Matter, some unions. Their organizing has been very important in the last period of time, inspiring many people from their constituencies to get involved in the climate emergency and giving direction to the rest of the climate movement.

Constituency organizing not only brings more people into working on the climate emergency but also their growth and the work we do together is pushing those of us in the predominantly white groups in the United States to work more deeply on our oppressor material [distress], thus strengthening our work. I think this is movement in a good direction: a base of constituencies organizing for their liberation and to solve climate change, and the white-led climate movement doing more solid work against oppression while following the lead of Native people and People of the Global Majority. It seems possible that this alliance can amass a large enough percentage of the population to turn this emergency around quickly

enough to avert catastrophe. And at the same time, we will have built a solid foundation for a society committed to ending exploitation and oppression.

A COMMITMENT TO END ALL OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION

The history of racism, genocide, and classism in our societies and in the environmental movement in particular leaves Native people, People of the Global Majority, and working-class and poor people distrustful of the predominantly white-middle-class-led climate movement (I am involved in that movement) that is now seeking alliance with them. They are unsure that we won't use their leadership and labor to win our battles to stop the climate emergency and then sell them out [abandon them and profit from them] to continue our comfortable lives, without our fighting on with them to challenge systemic oppression. We have a very bad track record on this front; the distrust is understandable.

350.org and the Sierra Club (the largest climate groups in the United States, both predominantly white and middle class) are the ones I am involved in. They continue to grow, continue to make important gains, and continue to struggle with racism, genocide, classism, sexism, and other oppressions. We acknowledge these struggles and are working hard to make this work central to our organizing. But our organizations are still dominated and limited by white, middle-class, male patterns. We need to move on the oppressor material [distress] faster than we are; this is the main work I do in these groups.

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

In talking to some of my Co-Counseling buddies who are Native, Global Majority, and working class, however, I can tell [see] that we white middle-class activists and groups still don't understand the depths of the damage from genocide, racism, and classism and that we have to make a much bigger commitment to ending oppression and exploitation. We have to demonstrate that commitment much more than we have for a permanent alliance to form and grow. It was helpful for me to be told that before we ask Native people, People of the Global Majority, and working-class and poor people to work side by side with us to end the climate emergency, we need to make an explicit commitment that we will fight by their side until we have achieved a full transformation of our society that ends all exploitation and oppression.

I have been discharging on making this commitment. I want to do this. We have talked about and

worked toward the transformation of society for a long time in RC, but how many of us make this our key work? Or we have it theoretically in our mind, but we don't live the commitment or we can't keep it in focus. I very much like the idea of making an explicit commitment and being held to it. I thought I had, but I don't think I have faced what this would mean. And I don't know how to build a movement with this commitment at the center. This is where I am discharging now.

What could we do in RC to make this a reality? Can we, as RCers, take this challenge on to build real unity internally toward this goal? Can we bring our wide-world organizations along with us? I'm starting to think of some of the steps I want to take soon in my wide-world climate work, including making sure of the following:

- That Native people and People of the Global Majority are reflected at every level of leadership

- That we are talking openly about and doing more work on capitalism and classism along with more work on racism and genocide

- That we are providing more support and resources to constituency groups (including supporting their work on oppression)

I am hopeful that moving the climate movement as a whole toward unity on these two goals can move us faster, as well as in a better direction.

Diane Shisk
Alternate International Reference
Person for the Re-evaluation
Counseling Communities
International Commonality Reference
Person for the Care of the Environment
Shoreline, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders in
the care of the environment



CANTÓN LA PUERTA, EL SALVADOR • GABRIEL MOLINA

Traducción al español del artículo anterior/Spanish translation of the preceding article:

Organizarse para tener un impacto decisivo

Queridas personas que trabajan en la emergencia climática,

Para terminar con la opresión, cada grupo tiene que luchar por su propia liberación: reunir a sus miembros, identificar y desahogar la opresión y la opresión internalizada, desarrollar su programa para la liberación de la opresión y difundirlo ampliamente, organizar a la gente a su alrededor, ganar aliados y aliadas, internacionalizarse. Harvey [Jackins] nos presentó esto hace décadas. RC siempre ha mantenido un fuerte compromiso para poner fin a la opresión.

UNA AMENAZA GLOBAL PARA CADA GRUPO

Ahora hay una amenaza global contra la supervivencia de cada grupo: la emergencia climática. Contamos con unos diez años para lograr cambios políticos importantes a nivel mundial e implementarlos. La comunidad de RC tiene objetivos y una iniciativa para detenerla.

No vamos a ser capaces de acabar con la opresión en diez años, y tenemos que hacer frente a la emergencia climática ahora o nos vamos a freír todos y todas. Afortunadamente, la organización más eficaz que hemos hecho contra el cambio climático ha sucedido al mismo tiempo que hemos abordado la opresión, y en especial el racismo, el genocidio y el clasismo. Este ha sido el enfoque de Sosteniendo todas las formas de vida ("SAL") y Unidos para Acabar con el Racismo ("UER") en nuestro trabajo por el clima (aunque hemos desarrollado más en cuanto a raza y genocidio que en cuanto a clase).

Creo que es parte de la liberación de cada grupo luchar por su supervivencia. Ningún grupo quiere dejar su supervivencia en manos de sus opresores (o personas aliadas pero inconscientes) o que su futuro sea dictado por esos patrones. Parece tener sentido que cada grupo se organice tanto para su propia liberación como para resolver la emergencia climática, para asegurar su propia supervivencia.

Muchas organizaciones climáticas basadas en los grupos de interés están haciendo un gran trabajo en los Estados Unidos (y otras se están organizando): Alianza para la justicia climática ("Climate Justice Alliance") y el Movimiento popular por el clima ("People's Climate Movement") (por parte de la mayoría global), La red indígena del medioambiente ("Indigenous Environmental Network") y No más inactividad ("Idle No More") (por parte de las personas indígenas), Amanecer ("Sunrise") y Los viernes por el futuro ("Fridays for Future") (la gente joven), Laudato Si' (Personas católicas), Dayenu (personas judías), Madres al frente ("Mothers Out Front"), Trabajadores por la sustentabilidad ("Labor for Sustainability"). Otros grupos han añadido fuertes objetivos ambientales a sus plataformas: "Campaña de la gente pobre ("Poor People's Campaign"), Las vidas de la gente afroamericana importan ("Black Lives Matter") y algunos sindicatos. Sus esfuerzos para organizar han sido muy importantes en estos últimos tiempos, inspirando a muchas personas de sus grupos a involucrarse en la emergencia



TIM JACKINS

climática y brindando dirección al resto del movimiento climático.

Organizar a los grupos de interés no sólo atrae a más personas a trabajar en la emergencia climática. Su crecimiento y el trabajo que hacemos en conjunto está empujando a las y a los que pertenecemos a los grupos predominantemente blancos en los Estados Unidos a trabajar más profundamente en nuestro material opresor, fortaleciendo así nuestro trabajo. Creo que este es movimiento en una buena dirección: una base de grupos que se organizan para su liberación y para resolver el cambio climático, así como el movimiento climático liderado por personas blancas haciendo un trabajo más sólido contra la opresión al seguir el liderazgo de las personas indígenas y de la mayoría global. Parece ser posible que esta alianza pueda acumular un porcentaje de la población lo suficientemente grande como para frenar a esta emergencia lo suficientemente rápido como para evitar la catástrofe. Y al mismo tiempo, habremos construido una base sólida de una sociedad comprometida a poner fin a la explotación y la opresión.

continuación . . .

... *continuación*

UN COMPROMISO PARA ACABAR CON TODA LA OPRESIÓN Y LA EXPLOTACIÓN

La historia de racismo, genocidio y clasismo en nuestras sociedades y en el movimiento ambientalista en particular, deja a las personas indígenas y de la mayoría global, a la clase trabajadora y en la pobreza, desconfiando del movimiento climático predominantemente blanco y dirigido por la clase media (yo estoy involucrada en ese movimiento) que ahora viene buscando una alianza con ellas. Hay una inseguridad acerca de que no usaremos su liderazgo y trabajo para ganar la batalla para detener la emergencia climática y luego venderlos [abandonarlos y beneficiarse de ellos] y continuar nuestras cómodas vidas, sin que luchemos con ellos para desafiar la opresión sistémica. Tenemos un muy mal historial en este frente; la desconfianza es comprensible.

350.org y el Sierra Club (los grupos climáticos más grandes de los Estados Unidos, ambos predominantemente blancos y de clase media), son en los que estoy involucrada. Estos continúan creciendo, siguen logrando importantes metas y siguen luchando contra el racismo, el genocidio, el clasismo, el sexismo y otras opresiones. Reconocemos estas luchas y estamos trabajando duro para que este trabajo sea central en nuestra organización. Pero nuestras organizaciones siguen dominadas y limitadas por los patrones de las personas blancas, la clase media y los hombres. Necesitamos avanzar en el material opresor [angustia] más rápido de lo que lo hacemos; este es el principal trabajo que hago en estos grupos.

Sin embargo, al hablar con compañeras y compañeras co-

escuchas indígenas y de la mayoría global y de la clase trabajadora, puedo decir que nosotras, las activistas y grupos blancos de la clase media, todavía no entendemos la profundidad del daño causado por el genocidio, el racismo y el clasismo, y que tenemos que hacer un compromiso mucho mayor para acabar con la opresión y la explotación. Tenemos que demostrar ese compromiso mucho más para que se forme y crezca una alianza permanente. Me fue útil que me dijeran que antes de pedir a las personas indígenas, y de la mayoría mundial, a la clase obrera y a las personas pobres que trabajen hombro a hombro con nosotros para poner fin a la emergencia climática tenemos que hacer un compromiso explícito de que lucharemos a su lado hasta que hayamos logrado una transformación completa de nuestra sociedad para poner fin a toda la explotación y la opresión.

He estado desahogando en hacer este compromiso. Quiero hacerlo. Hemos hablado y trabajado para la transformación de la sociedad durante mucho tiempo en RC, pero ¿cuántas personas ponen este trabajo como su enfoque central? O lo tenemos teóricamente en nuestra mente, pero no vivimos el compromiso, o no podemos mantener el enfoque. Me gusta mucho la idea de hacer un compromiso explícito y de que se mantenga. Pensé que lo había hecho, pero no creo que haya enfrentado lo que esto significaría. Y no sé cómo construir un movimiento con este compromiso en el centro. Aquí es donde estoy desahogando ahora.

¿Qué podríamos hacer en RC para convertir esto a una realidad? ¿Podemos, como co-escuchas, asumir este desafío de construir una verdadera unidad interna hacia este objetivo? ¿Podemos traer con nosotras las organizaciones del



HAWAII, USA • TIM JACKINS

mundo? Estoy empezando a pensar en algunos de los pasos que quiero dar pronto en mi trabajo climático que hago en el mundo, incluyendo asegurarme de lo siguiente:

- Que se vean reflejadas las personas indígenas y de la mayoría global en todos los niveles de liderazgo
- Que estamos hablando abiertamente y haciendo más trabajo sobre el capitalismo y el clasismo junto con más trabajo sobre el racismo y el genocidio
- Que estamos brindando más apoyo y recursos a los diferentes grupos de interés (incluyendo apoyar su trabajo sobre la opresión)

Tengo la esperanza de que al mover el movimiento climático en su totalidad hacia la unidad en estos dos objetivos nos mueva más rápido, y así también en una mejor dirección.

Diane Shisk

Persona suplente internacional de referencia para las comunidades internacionales de RC

Persona de referencia de la comunidad internacional para el cuidado del medio ambiente

Shoreline, Washington, EE.UU

Traducido por Cuca Martínez

Reimpreso de la lista de discusión por correo electrónico de RC para los líderes del cuidado del medio ambiente

The Reality of Social Distancing in My Culture

My cousin, L—, died last week. She is being buried this morning. I could not go to mourn her death. I could not attend her funeral because I live in the city and work with people from different parts of the world. I am a risk to myself and to my village where my cousin died.

According to my community, I am being selfish and inconsiderate. Who will come to support me during my time of loss?

Most of the people in the village are older generation and are already sickly. They are the ones relied upon to look after [care for] their sick relatives who have been kicked out of hospitals because they are not getting well fast enough.

You must understand that the hospitals in this part of the world were already overcrowded long before the coronavirus came about. In general, people who are chronically ill are just given medication and told to go home. Many people need care. It is often the elderly who look after the sick because they are not employed.

The younger generation will try to find work. Even if they can't find work, they will hang around the cities and towns, where they are at a much higher risk of exposure, because this is where everyone converges, including people from high-risk areas.

On weekends, the town people generally go back to their villages to visit their parents and the sick ones they have left behind. This is what most responsible people do because they still have to provide for their parents. Only this time they take the coronavirus with them. Most are still healthy and may not be suffering any symptoms.

The reality of social distancing means we can't continue our usual practices and protect our loved ones at the same time. I'm afraid it may already be too late because our government was much too slow in stopping external travel. Until a week ago people were free to travel in and out of the country as they pleased. We had celebrations that were attended by thousands of people, including visitors from Europe who mingled freely with the participants.

When I learned about my cousin's death, I struggled to console my aunt over the phone, trying to explain to her why it was not safe for her and the rest of the community if "too many people" from the city came to the village.

Our government has no testing facilities and relies entirely on South Africa to conduct tests. Not everyone

gets tested because until today only people who have travelled have been required to go for testing. Yesterday the government reported that one of the people who tested positive for the virus had not traveled anywhere. Nobody has a clue as to where they could have gotten the virus. The government is still investigating instead of telling people what "community transition" means. [It means that the source of the infection or transmission is unknown.] They have been telling people that unless they have travelled, they are not at risk.

So how does one enforce social distancing against the strong cultural values of community? It takes a generation to change a culture. Swazis are a communal people. We do things together. The community joins together in happiness and in death. We celebrate when somebody is born. We celebrate when they marry. When somebody dies, we mourn together. We attend the funeral together. This is who we are. This is true for most communities and villages across the whole African continent.

It is one of the few things we have held on to despite the effects of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism (which promote individualism). And now we have to learn to keep apart because of some stupid virus. Please forgive me for being angry (a good thing because for many weeks I have been numb).

This is hitting me where it hurts the most. Having to tell my family that I cannot be with them in their time of grief in order to protect them is the hardest thing I have had to do this year. I love my family, and my cousin was dear to me.

What I struggle with the most is people's denial about the threat posed by the virus. Most people go around

continued . . .



ERIC TOENSMEIER

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

thinking that they are “safe” when they are unknowingly putting others at risk. Even worse, most people have given up and resigned themselves to “come what may” because it is written in the Bible about the “end of days.”

As an RC Community we are trying hard to stay connected. That, too, is hard because we have to rely more and more on technology. In order to connect via Zoom we need more Community members using smartphones. We cannot afford that because the price of data is prohibitive. Prices are fixed because of greed.

So how do my Community and I hold to our intelligence and figure out new solutions to the challenges we face when everything seems so dim? I want to remain hopeful.

What is clear to me is that social distancing alone is not enough. Not only is it impossible to enforce in our

culture, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that many more people are already carrying the virus. For me, it is how do we keep the death rate of those that are most at risk at a minimum? It is a fact that we cannot rely on the government or the hospitals. Hospital staff are already shunning patients that are “too ill,” because they have not been provided adequate protective clothing.

I know that there must be a way. I have faith in RC. It is the only thing that has not yet failed me. I know that together we can figure out a way. My Community depends on it.

“Mngani”

Eswatini

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

Nature Returns

We have been having a daily lockdown from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. To go to another district we have to have special permission, be in full protective gear, and test negative to the coronavirus.

I managed to get permission and protective gear to go to another district because I needed to take a person to a hospital that specialized in back problems. We decided to go a few kilometers beyond the hospital to Lake Naivasha.

Lake Naivasha has always had beautiful wildlife, including flamingos, hippos, and many birds. It was amazing to see how clean the water has become. Some birds and insects are coming to the lake that have never been seen before. Lots of fish are visible, swimming in the clean water. Gazelles, water bucks, and warthogs are walking freely. The air smells fresh and pure.

The hotels surrounding the area are no longer occupied by tourists. There is no trash around the lake, no pollution, and no noise from the tour boats that usually keep animals away. The quiet has created an uninterrupted opportunity for the animals to feel at home.

The lockdown has only been for a few days, and nature is coming back. Life is coming back—it is like a paradise.

Our human activities are a total disaster for other living creatures. We need to reflect on our destruction of the environment and its impact on the creatures we share the world with. It is time to figure out how to coexist with all the living creatures around us.

Wanjiku Kironyo

Nairobi, Kenya

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

A Difficult and Complex Situation

The situation in my country is difficult and complex. We are a small country with a high population density. Most people are living in poverty or extreme poverty, especially women. The majority of workers belong to the informal sector—street vendors, domestic workers, and unpaid caretakers of their families.

Women, as caregivers, are the most affected. They are the first line of caring for others—in hospitals, health centers, quarantine centers, and at home.

Basic services are lacking even without the coronavirus—and it's worse now. More than half the population lacks safe drinking water, and more than ninety percent get water only for a short time each day. I get water service for two hours daily and use a cistern the rest of the day.

The health care system was already in a critical situation prior to the coronavirus. Hospitals lack medicine, and there are not enough health personnel or enough beds in the few public hospitals. Here, women die daily from diseases related to childbirth and pregnancy, malnutrition, respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases, and breast and cervical cancer.

Violence against women is a serious problem. There is a high rate of pregnancy among girls and young women, mostly the result of sexual violence. Many women are killed by their partners or by violence in their communities. This is one of the Latin American countries with the highest rate of femicide. Violence against women is evident in emergency situations, for example, in shelters and quarantine sites.

Many workers in the public sector are now working from home. First sent home were women over sixty, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases.

Social isolation imposes new challenges for how we live, how we relate to each other, and how we consume. For women facing violence, home is often not the safest place to be, especially at this time. Many feelings need to be discharged to think flexibly and creatively and to just move forward every day.

Many steps have been taken to contain the virus. Unfortunately, the government has not clearly communicated how to make the measures effective. This leaves room for arbitrary actions and human rights violations. With my country's history of repression, military dictatorship, and a civil war, human rights violations would not be surprising. Patterns of authoritarianism, superiority, classism, sexism, and the oppression of young people can once again target working-class people and people living in poverty.

MY SITUATION

How is it for me as a single, older, working-class woman?

Memories of the war and the underground come to mind over and over again. Being and feeling isolated. Fear of dying. Terror. Insecurity about money and about losing my job. Fear of getting sick, being alone, and not being able to breathe because of pneumonia. I'm also feeling numb and disconnected. I don't want to hear anything.

I've done the following to contradict the above feelings: I got in touch with my regular Co-Counselors and set up as many sessions as possible to discharge my early hurts. I'm also resting more, watering my plants, and appreciating my garden and the space where I live. My daughter is with me, also working from home, so we have more time together and are more connected.

I appreciate your attention to this message.

In solidarity,

Anonymous



SALT MARSH, SKIERMÛNTSEACH, FRYSLÂN, THE NETHERLANDS • ROB VENDERBOS

Illness and Disability and Video Calling

As someone whose physical contacts have been limited by illness and disability, I have used video calls for many years. Disabled and chronically ill people have been creative in using the Internet to build closeness. For many of us, it's our main way to gather with other people. Video calling is not inherently isolating. In some cases, it offers more or different contradictions [to distress] than in-person contact.

The pandemic is providing many new ways to connect and create community for people with Internet access. While this leaves many people out, it still increases access for large numbers of people, and this can move our thinking about inclusion forward.

It is important for our climate and ecology future that we do less traveling and use less energy maintaining larger buildings. This means that gathering online will become more common. We need to make sure that gathering online is completely available to poor and working-class people worldwide and to people in remote rural locations. Discharging on our restimulations about this technology will allow us to make the best of the tools we have.

Because of my environmental illness, being physically close to people can be challenging. Scented body products and other chemicals in buildings can make me sick. I also have epilepsy, which prevents me from driving, and for the last four years I have lived in rural areas far from my Co-Counselors. I also spent five years in a city far from my home RC Community and my regular Co-Counselors. As a result, I have been counseling online for many years. It has allowed me to maintain my most important relationships across time and space.

Many chronically ill people have active online lives and depend on them. We have become creative at using the Internet to build closeness. I am part of an online community of sick and disabled people with some other shared identities. It has become an important support system for its members in which people share information and resources and ask for specific kinds of emotional support, advice, or opportunities to share feelings without comments from anyone else. I feel so close to many of these people that when I finally met a group of them face to face, I had to keep reminding myself that this was



JERVIS BAY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • LYNDALL KATZ

our first in-person meeting. I am currently living in Puerto Rico, and many of these people organized to send packages of medicines and other supplies to us during our earthquake disaster here.

Video-call counseling does not have to feel disconnected. It's just a tool, and our feelings about it can be discharged. Humans have many different ways of noticing our connections, and we have learned to use new ways of communicating again and again. When the telephone first became widely available, many people found it challenging to use. It felt artificial to talk to a person they couldn't see by speaking into a machine. But we adapted. I've done oral history interviews with people who were alive when the first automobiles appeared. Many people were terrified of them, but we adapted.

While physical contact is biologically and socially important to us, it's not the only way to feel intimacy. Although physical closeness offers many contradictions, it can also bring a lot of restimulation. My mother and I were close, but our relationship was at its best by telephone. When we were in the same place, many more distresses from her childhood and mine came up. But on the phone, we had much better attention for each other. We can adapt our need for connection to many different tools. When people relied on handwritten letters sent through the mail, the slowness of that communication often added thoughtfulness, and people treasured letters for years, re-reading them again and again. I have had many long intimate phone calls with friends.

As the climate and ecological crisis deepens, it will be more and more important that we not spend fuel traveling in order to be together in person. We will need to stop spending energy maintaining large meeting spaces. Learning to use our communication technology creatively to build closeness and share thinking will be essential to the next stage of our societies, and this will require us to make sure everyone has access to it. The Internet needs to be universally available and free. We can't afford to be without a single human mind.

Because I have a lot of social isolation due to my disabilities and illnesses, and I have Internet access, which many people don't, the pandemic has dramatically improved my ability to connect. Many disabled and chronically ill people, and people in remote rural areas who have Internet access, are experiencing this. The big increase in video conferencing has created much more access to community than we had before. While this access is tied to class privilege, it is still allowing large numbers of people in countries with widespread WI-FI to experience more connection. In fact, while many people are unable to work and earn a living, some of us have more opportunities than we did before. I earn an important part of my income by lecturing and teaching, but travel is hard on my body and expensive. As universities and colleges adapt to the pandemic, I am able to do this work from my home.

I have not been able to attend most RC workshops because of chemically inaccessible buildings and unaware habits around the use of fragrances. Suddenly I can. Organizing workshop food that I can eat for a whole weekend away from home is a lot of hard work that I don't have to do now. For years I have been asking my synagogue, which is not very accessible, to have at least some of its services available online. It was never a priority until the healthy, able-bodied members began to experience the isolation people like me have struggled with for years. I am more able to connect with the congregation than ever before in thirty years. I go to services and support group meetings and take part in discussions about policies to end classism and the oppression of disabled people. I can see the faces of people I've known for years, even though I now live thousands of miles away, in an area with no Jews. I'm able to teach classes with a lot of emotional content to students in faraway places without putting my body through the hardships of travel.

Getting good at this means we'll have to change how we do some things. It doesn't make sense to look at a screen for as many hours as we would normally be together in a workshop. We have to get better at making sure our faces are well lit for people who are hard of hearing, using captions, and describing charts and images for people who are blind or can only join by phone. Able-bodied people who are struggling with what frustrates them about Zoom have an opportunity to imagine and discharge about all the obstacles disabled people face every day, and figuring these things out together can help us think better about access in general.

There are many ways to discharge about needing to depend on long-distance closeness. First thoughts:

- “We are fully connected whether I can feel it or not.”
- Work on our earliest experiences of physical distance and isolation.
- Rant about how much we hate the new technologies.
- Work on other big technological changes that impacted us, people close to us, or our ancestors.
- “Sometimes humans learn how to use new tools and have fun doing it.”
- “It’s possible I could grow to love Zoom.”
- “I finally get to see all my sick and disabled friends!”
- “I will make sure every human being on earth can share their thinking with this tool.”

I'm interested in how others are discharging on using video calls.

Aurora Levins Morales
Maricao, Puerto Rico

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



SKY YARBROUGH

Africa Is Our Own

Janet Kabue (Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya) recently led a Zoom meeting on climate change.

We need to work together for all our goals. We can “live beyond” the pandemic while we are still embattled with it. There is no lockdown in RC—life must continue irrespective of what is trending.

We have internalized the oppressions of colonialism. We were labelled “Third World” and “backward,” so we try to shake that tag by catching up with the development of the Western world. This has meant technology, buildings, the general “rat race” of imperialism, prosperity-driven ventures, and “survival of the fittest.”

When other countries poisoned nature with their factories and industries, they moved production to Africa—and we’ve mistakenly seen this as being “developed” and a source of pride.

It is important that we not blame ourselves but instead ask, What have we lost? To make a difference and correct the situation, we need to be aware of what we have lost. What is the price we are paying for being called “developed”? We need to notice the things in nature that were in place but are no longer there, so we can mourn them. We need to discharge and then fight to protect what we have left, as well as stop the destruction.

Africa is our own, and we can make it a better place to live with our collective efforts!

Pamela Ukaku
Area Reference Person for the
Umuahia-Abia RC Community
Umuahia, Abia-State, Nigeria



WILLIAM M. LOVING

Connecting, Leading, Organizing

Dear Tim [Jackins],

How things have changed since I saw you last month. Hope you’re well and dealing with a reasonable amount of everything.

My regular RC activities include mini-sessions with my contacts in El Salvador and Morocco. I have noticed that the more I can discharge well in my turns as client online, the better others can discharge. Sometime people discharge best during my sessions. My ability to discharge has improved by long-term RC practice and many sessions as client connecting with my counselor, even when I didn’t necessarily feel connected at first.

On the climate change front, I have supported the Chase bank protests (Chase has been one of the world’s biggest financial supporters of the fossil fuels industry and a backer of genocide against Indigenous people). In January, about a hundred Extinction Rebellion members met in the parking lot of the Hollywood (California, USA) branch of Chase bank. The group was going to go through the bank urging customers to close their accounts. However, the bank found out we were there and closed for business that day. So we had a “die-in” outside and some people tore up their bank cards.

When I closed my Chase account in my neighborhood, the employee thanked me for explaining my action and said she would convey the message and that my voice would be heard. I then opened a credit union account. At work, when some of my trusted allies talked about what they did over the weekend and asked me about my weekend, I told them I had shut down a bank in Hollywood. That got discharge and questions about how it happened. Chase has since made some concessions in the Arctic, but not enough in the world as a whole.

Love,
Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA

From a U.S. Health Care Worker

I am a nurse working for a health care organization in the United States. My organization recently made headlines when patients tested positive for COVID-19. The folks who tested them were emergency room doctors and nurses who were being both diligent and inquisitive after they could not discover what was wrong.

Most of the hospitals around me now have patients who are testing positive for COVID-19. A younger doctor who worked in the emergency room now has the virus and is in the intensive care unit at his hospital. Many of my coworkers have had mild symptoms of something without being allowed to be tested. Most either took no days off work and wore masks or took some time off briefly while having active symptoms. I commonly hear people say that they do not think they have the virus because they do not have a fever.

STRUGGLES

Many health care workers I know (both in RC and not in RC) are struggling with finding a way to fulfill their duties as health care professionals while also getting accurate information based in science *and* keeping themselves safe, alive, and with enough peace of mind to actually work. It is a scary time.

At my agency we have been having meetings with our medical director and executive director. They have been speaking with us in an open forum format. (All meetings are supposed to be virtual.) About three weeks ago my dear friend and coworker said her boss was insisting that she and others come

into the office for work and then attend a meeting later in the day. This friend earns a low hourly wage doing scheduling and administrative duties. I asked her to tell them no, but she did not feel empowered. I contacted her boss and said we are supposed to be working remotely if possible. Her boss was mad because she was home sick and did not want to deal with me while she was not working. I contacted my boss, and after discussion we decided together that my boss would intervene, which she did.

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) has been at our hospital with our management and directors. They focused initially on the patients who are coming into the hospital and dying very rapidly. Those of us who work in home care have been doing our best to get information about personal protective equipment and protocols. Often new information comes in and things change within an hour or a few hours. This is happening worldwide, of course. There's so much uncertainty everywhere, and health care workers here are not sure if we are being given all the accurate information.

I've noticed that a lot of my coworkers (and the general public) are blasé and numb. Others are panicked. As health care workers, many of us are trying to stay aware without feeling too much fear.

The hardest thing has been getting accurate information. My medical director has said a few times that what we know about the virus and its spread changes so quickly that the CDC doesn't even have time to update their website.



JO PERRY

When information changes, there is a lag. This causes a lot of upset about what we're doing in terms of community transmission and asymptomatic transmission and in facilities that have virus-positive patients. My coworkers and I work in private homes, housing complexes, and community facilities that are also struggling to get the most up-to-date information. After some sessions, I concluded that we should not house our elders in complexes where there are so many of them together and the caregivers are paid a low wage and expected (or forced) to take care of too many people. This is not safe and not sustainable. Most of the workers in these complexes that I have met are women of color from outside of the United States.

It has been helpful to go against internalized sexism and speak out at work on behalf of a workforce that is predominantly female. I have done this repeatedly. I am sometimes ignored or treated harshly except by my immediate supervisor. However, the health care workers listen to me.

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for women, working-class people, and RC Community members

Union Activists

We union activists know things and have done things about making change. Many of us have been doing change work for decades. Most of us don't talk enough in RC about what we do.

Would you like to know how to do the following?

- Organize a rally with hundreds or thousands attending
- Get arrested on purpose to push an agenda
- Build relationships behind the scenes with people in power who are opposed to your agenda and get them to move on your agenda
- Get a state government to commit millions of dollars to move something forward that is important to you
- Connect organizations that have never connected, when you now need them to work together
- Keep a mission-focused group going for twenty years

- Research regulations in your area and increase enforcement of current laws

- Get a new law passed
- Get a group of working-class people, who have never done it before, to lobby elected officials
- Write a play (and get it produced) to bring attention to your issue
- Build "bridges" in a group across race and gender
- Discharge about making big change, face your significance, and move discouragement
- Bring a disparate group together, release initiative, and make measurable change in something that's been stagnant for forty years
- Talk with someone completely opposed to your mission then move them over time to support it
- Call a strike

- Stay in the fight, right in the belly of capitalism

For everything listed above, I can name a union activist in RC who has done it.

We're not the only ones who know these things, but we do know a lot. We've *done* a lot. Talk to us, especially those of us who work for unions as full-time organizers. We've taken action and accomplished a lot with our own heavy loads of despair, discouragement, and other big early challenges, so we also know something about moving in spite of the feelings.

And to my union activist buddies: Speak up! Tell your stories! Lead on making change! Climate change and the planet need our skills and experience!

"Mary Francis Carpenter"
USA



PUMPHOUSE POINT, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA • NICOLA OSSHER

When Is It Time to Leave an Organization?

How do you know when it's time to stop doing your wide-world-change activism in one organization and move on to another? I have been active and taken leadership in a women's organization during the last eight years. I try to use my privilege as a white middle-class woman in the United States in helpful ways. We are now backing [supporting] People of the Global Majority and working-class and poor folks in other partner organizations. We are also doing work to end racism in our own organization. We now have more women of color in key leadership positions.

I have had a good impact. However, I am now being more and more marginalized politically. I share my ideas—and they are dismissed. We are working on ending racism, but the group won't look at women's liberation and ending classism (or other oppressions). I am assigned hard work that keeps current projects going but am not invited to be on committees that decide the organization's future direction.

I have been counseling on all of this for a couple of years. Still, it's not clear what I should do. One of my Co-Counselors suggested I write to this e-mail discussion list and ask for your views about when it's time to move on from one's wide-world-change activism in a particular group.

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

Taking On One's Own Struggles

Dear Anonymous,

Thank you for putting forward the issues you are facing in your wide-world women's organization [see previous article].

I want to start by saying that many progressive organizations (women's organizations and more general organizations) have stopped tackling sexism directly and do not see themselves as taking on women's liberation activities. This seems to have played a role in your organization. I won't analyze this issue further right now, but it is a big issue that affects all groups of people. Figuring out how to make sexism central and back [support] women to again prioritize the fight against it (without limiting the battles against racism, classism, and so on) is exceptionally important.

Regarding whether you should leave your organization, I will draw what many might think is a funny [strange] analogy. I see political organizations like marriages. (I have never been married but have been in many political organizations.) We enter into a relationship because of the positives and what we share in common. Then somewhere along the way we hit the chronic patterns, or the person who initially gave us important "things" now cannot give us something we feel we really need. It seems like we have only two alternatives: "settling"—giving up something we

feel we need and accepting the other person's limitations—or leaving and going somewhere else.

In either case, it is important to examine our own end of the problems and our vulnerabilities. We have to look at our own struggles. If we don't, then we think the problem is only the other person's or the organization's. And we bring our difficulties into the next relationship—with a person or an organization. I've seen this happening in the women's movement.

All movements and organizations include patterns. People are often guided by painful emotion. They also face hard struggles. Sometimes people do need to get divorced, but in doing that it is important that they not abandon someone or leave things stuck. We have to take on our own hard places and also the hard issues.

We cannot successfully resolve the issues we care about if we don't examine ourselves and use the discharge process to work on our struggles.

I have been involved in many wide-world organizations—mostly women's organizations, peace organizations, and Jewish peace organizations. I have always played a visible leadership role. I have often stopped leading and participating at some point—for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons are related to the limitations of the organization (without RC and

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

discharge, patterns remain patterns) and some to my own limitations.

I, like everyone else, have needed to take on my own struggles in leadership (RC has been a major help). Mine have included the following: (1) fears about being attacked and not being able to take on attacks with relaxed confidence, (2) frozen needs to be liked and popular and not wanting to feel disliked when people disagree with me, (3) my limitations around racism and classism, (4) as a Jew, needing to keep discharging on the RC Jewish commitment (to “treat every person I meet as if she or he were eager to be my warm, close, dependable friend and ally, under all conditions”), (5) needing to learn how to back people in visible positions and lead from behind, (6) internalized sexism (I am still discharging on reclaiming my full power), (7) always looking at my own integrity.

Whether you stay or leave, you need to work on your difficulties in the situation. What would you need to feel in order to take on the challenges and take charge in the situation?

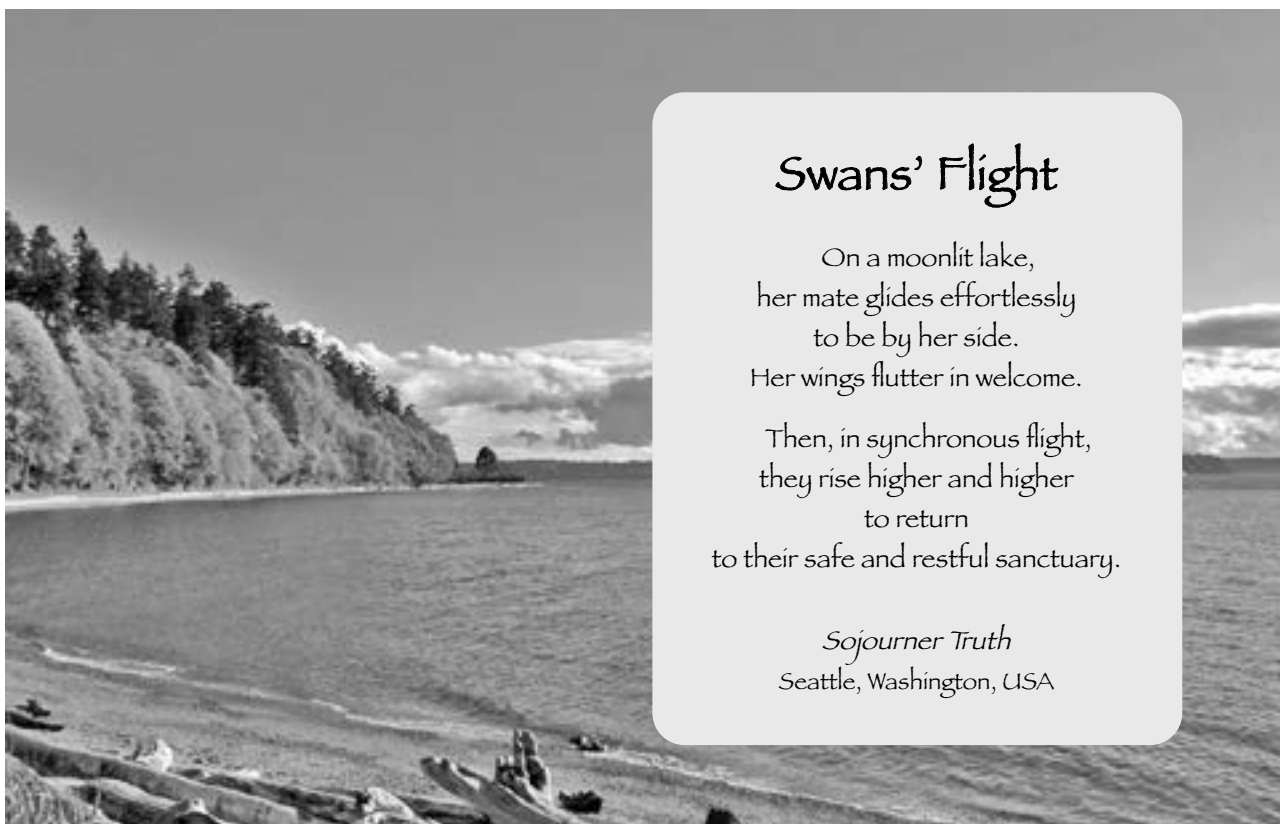
You mentioned you “used your privilege as a white middle-class woman” to help the women take on rac-

ism and that now you are being marginalized. This perspective could be problematic. I’m not there with you and I don’t know what is actually happening, but it’s likely you need to discharge feelings of victimization. You assisted the women and the organization to take on racism. It seems like you played the role of an ally. You get to feel pleased about that but not necessarily get credit for it (you can take credit in sessions). Wherever there is racism on your end, you get to work on it.

Winning women over on the importance of addressing sexism is a complex and long struggle. I would never abandon any woman who can’t yet take on sexism for herself. You need to continue to make friends with and be an ally and sister to the women of your organization, whether you stay or leave. Growth is dynamic.

I hope this is helpful.

Diane Balsler
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change



Swans' Flight

On a moonlit lake,
her mate glides effortlessly
to be by her side.
Her wings flutter in welcome.

Then, in synchronous flight,
they rise higher and higher
to return
to their safe and restful sanctuary.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

The U.S. Election Is Critical to Addressing the Climate Emergency

The U.S. election this year is critical to addressing the climate emergency. I wrote an article for a wide world publication to help people understand the urgency of the situation, why the United States must join global efforts for climate action, and why part of our climate activism must be getting people to vote Democratic in November. Another four years of this administration would result in a global climate catastrophe.

I published my article on Medium.com. It is the first article I've written for the wide world on why I think replacing this administration in the November elections is one of the most important things we in the United States can do in the next seven months to address the climate emergency.

I led two Sustaining All Life workshops in the fall on this topic and two gather-ins for the RC Community in the last few weeks. My article contains the rationale for my conclusions. The title is "'4 more years' means (at least) 4°C of global warming." As you probably know, scientists

predict that that level of warming would pose an existential threat to humanity and other life forms.

I am hoping that this article will be useful to those of us who are talking to others about why they should vote and why they should vote Democratic in the fall elections. (You can forward them the link, then listen to them about what they think, and then share your thoughts.) Many people are discouraged by the electoral process in the United States, discouraged enough to think it doesn't matter if they don't vote, or it doesn't matter which party they vote for.

The key point in the article is that this administration undermines action on climate change globally and will be even worse if re-elected. If we don't elect an administration that will move forward on these issues, the world (not just the United States) is facing much more rapid global warming and the resulting tipping points. I think a lot of people don't realize how urgent it is that the United

States address the climate emergency now.

My understanding is that if enough people indicate they like this article online (by "clapping" at the end), it will make it more likely I can get it published elsewhere, which I'm going to try to do next week. Here is the link:

<https://medium.com/@dshisk/4-more-years-means-at-least-4-c-of-global-warming-b6ebc9f3ddc3>

I hope the article is useful to you and that you like it. If you have feedback, I'd love to hear that, too. Thank you for taking on these important issues with me.

Diane Shisk

Alternate International Reference

Person for the Re-evaluation

Counseling Communities

International Commonality Reference

Person for the Care of the

Environment

Shoreline, Washington, USA

dshisk@me.com

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for USA political issues

Remember the Stupidity of the Pattern

You're only threatened by patterns. Patterns are fierce; patterns are destructive; patterns are hard and heavily charged-up; but they're stupid! There can be accidental defeats, but, in general, the only time a pattern can vanquish the human being is when the human being slips back into a pattern and acts in a patterned way in response. As long as you're being flexible yourself, there's almost always a chance to duck a pattern. The pattern doesn't know what to do without a patterned response from you. Remember the stupidity of the pattern.

Harvey Jackins

From page 101 of "Working in Wide World Organizations," in *A Better World*

A journal well worth waiting for!

Side By Side No. 4, Volume 1

It has been several years since the last issue of *Side By Side*, the journal for LGBTQ RCers and their allies. As happens with all constituencies, and as will be clear from the pages of this exciting new issue, clarity and understanding have grown with discharge, re-evaluation, and changing times.

The following is from the introduction to *Side By Side* No. 4:

Side By Side represents the experiences and the work of people from many countries, ages, and identities. It is no longer simply a "Gay liberation" journal. There now exist many identities. These identities provide a home base for people whose lives can often be more fully understood in light of a distinct sex- and/or gender-based identity.

Conditions and cultures are changing rapidly in many places worldwide. These changes affect us all. We are all invited to discharge on sex and identity. Some of our long-held assumptions about what is "normal" may no longer be accurate when seen through the filters of change and discharge.

In Re-evaluation Counseling we are all expected to check our assumptions through the discharge and re-evaluation process. The subjects of sex and identity are no exception.

J—
International Liberation Reference Person for Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender People
and D—
Assistant International Liberation Reference Person for
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender People

\$4.00, plus postage and handling

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops. They are intended primarily for RC teachers but can be ordered by anyone. A new CD is produced each quarter. The series is called *RC Teacher Updates*.

For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see pages 107 and 108 of this *Present Time*.

Anyone can order any of the CDs for \$10 each, plus postage and handling.

The 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 four-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last.

The 12-CD sets for 2006, 2007, and 2008; for 2009, 2010, and 2011; for 2012, 2013, and 2014; and for 2015, 2016, and 2017 are each available to anyone for \$40 per set.

If you are a certified RC teacher, the upcoming four CDs per year are available on a subscription basis and mailed out quarterly, for \$25 a year. If you are not a certified RC teacher, you can subscribe for \$35 a year. Anyone can order up to three years at a time.

Note: RCTU 62 is also available digitally. Subscribers will be e-mailed the link and the password. Non-subscribers can order the digital version for the same price as the CD.

Ordering information on page 111 and at <www.rationalisland.com>

Since *The Benign Reality*, by Harvey Jackins, won't be reprinted for a while, we are continuing to print parts of it in Present Time. Here is another selection.

Think-and-Listens

We have one particular invention in Re-evaluation Counseling that as far as I know is not used elsewhere. I suggest that you use it the next time there is a free-choice period [at a workshop]. I heartily recommend it. This is what we have called the Think-and-Listen session.

It began at the first Profundity Workshop that we held (a gallant name). It was a workshop for trying to think about what we had so far learned in RC. It had valuable results.

We tried Think-and-Listens there for the first time with groups of about four people. This is a good size. (It doesn't have to be four people but about that size.) These people get together to think out loud with agreement on specific conditions. These are simply that they share the time equally, and each person is free to think as best as they can about anything they want to think about. They may be encouraged ahead of time to think of frontier questions, such as, how do I relate to that blade of grass, what would completely adequate parenting be like, what would it be like to have complete support or a happy childhood, what is the real relationship between me and the most distant star I can glimpse, what will humanity be like in fifty years, what is the reality of my own nature—all kinds of questions like that to encourage daring thinking. But, the person in the session is free to think about whatever they want.

(In the RC Communities the term Think-and-Listen has been

sometimes distorted by people announcing, "We will have a Think-and-Listen on how we are going to pay off our literature bill," but I would rather we called that an "Anybody-Got-Any-Ideas?" session. I would like to reserve the term "Think-and-Listen" for this original form in which each person thinks out loud about whatever he or she wants to think about.)

We get a glimpse of how well we can think under ideal conditions.

If the people find they have to discharge, they use the time for discharge. No problem there; but the essential characteristic is that



MURAL, IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • SUE EDWARDS

all the other people listen with aware, interested attention but do not respond or interact in any way. Not by posture, facial expression, sound, or any word do the others comment in any sense on what any person says there. Not then, nor in the future. That you are forbidden to do. You enter into an agreement that you will not quote to anyone outside the group what any person there said. You will not in your turn respond to anything that the others said in their turns. Just once in our lives we have the chance to really think and really be listened to with our thinking protected in a crystal chalice of complete non-intervention.

It has worked differently for different people, but for most of us who have tried this we have found that our thinking is enormously enhanced. Trying this, we realize that the fear of other people's comments, of other people's responses to our thinking, has severely inhibited us in the usual discussion group. There is often apparently a large amount of fear and timidity triggered by the presence of other people and what they are thinking of us, or what they are going to say about our ideas, or how they are going to quote us later on. If we try Think-and-Listens a couple of times and can believe this is removed, we get a glimpse of how *well* we can think under ideal conditions.

I would certainly recommend that at some time, if not at this conference, each of you organize a whole series of Think-and-Listens.

continued . . .

... continued

I haven't done it lately and I just realize as I speak how much I have missed it. I think that you will find that your horizons are pushed back, just by being able to think out loud, knowing that nothing that you will say will ever be quoted at you or anyone else.

If you hear a good idea from somebody at a Think-and-Listen and you want to talk about it in the wide world, talk about it like it was your own idea. Don't dare connect it to the person who said it, because they must keep this sacred confidence that they can think freely without anybody else's response coming in, to interrupt.

Question: Would you suggest it is helpful to have a general topic to think about?

No. Exactly not. That is what I said. Call those times "Anybody-Got-Any-Ideas?" sessions. Preserve the Think-and-Listen so the person is free, without any restriction at all from any suggestion from outside about what they are going to think about. I mention the horizon-pushing kind of topics ahead of time at workshop Think-and-Listens because people get so in the habit of believing it is their duty to think about how to skip the syrup on their pancakes the next morning, or how to get their underwear washed out so it's dry by the time they go home, and all these kinds of things. I think it is helpful if the leader raises the possibilities of a lot of other topics than the usual worried ruts, but it is important that each person choose their own topic.

Harvey Jackins
From pages 41 to 43 of
"Thinking About Thinking"
in *The Benign Reality*

The Power of Think-and-Listens

With all of our chronic material [distress] restimulated by this COVID-19 pandemic, it seems that many of us are having a hard time thinking freshly and expansively. My mind has been at work all these weeks. However, my thinking has been almost entirely in response to the external situation as it unfolds. What has been missing has been the opportunity to let my mind run free, consider the larger picture, imagine what might be possible, identify new openings and possibilities.

Of course, we need to discharge on early distress—more than ever these days. And discharge reliably frees up fresh thinking. But I'm starting to wonder if we are taking full advantage of the potential for Think-and-Listens. The following are some that I've been part of recently:

At our Regional workshop at the end of March, the leader divided us into three-ways for discharge. This was followed by a Think-and-Listen. It was wonderful and invigorating to do both. I did the same thing in my teachers' and leaders' class with good results.

At one of her workshops, Marcie Rendon (the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans) responded to someone's question by giving that person an opportunity to think for five minutes in front of the group—and then gave her another five minutes. In my session the following week I remembered that possibility and took ten minutes just to let my mind work. It felt like a breath of fresh air!

The following week I was on the phone with someone from the workshop and I mentioned Think-and-Listens. He said that was just what he needed. So we exchanged ten minutes each way. Our minds were eager to reflect on our situation and come up with [think of] steps for moving forward that we hadn't been able to formulate without that protected space and added attention. It was an empowering and hopeful experience.

A leader from outside my Region said that she was asking people in her class to take one minute each to talk about the world they want—another example of thinking with attention.

I encourage all of us to remember this powerful tool we have in our RC toolbox and find ways to use it more often in these extraordinary times.

Pamela Haines
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Report from Uganda: Family Work and Online Sessions

I learned RC in 2007 as a sixteen-year-old. It has been a useful tool in my day-to-day life.

FAMILY WORK

Family work has been the best, given that I live with and care for seven younger sisters and stepsisters.

I had been doing family work—including sessions, appreciations, and mini-sessions with the teens and young adults at the compound. I hadn't done much with the younger children (ages six to ten) except for listening, holding them when they cried, and doing special time (which they loved the most). They had never attended any sessions or classes with the teens and young adults.

Then I invited the three little girls to join our class—and that was the end of my thinking they were not meant for it. Our class started with sharing what's new and good. Then I did a brief introduction to RC for the three little children, especially about Co-Counseling sessions because we were going to have a session and I didn't want them to be confused. Then we did a session on our earliest memory of hurt.

Listening to the little ones was my highlight of the class. One talked about loss of a loved one; her eyes became wet, and her voice trembled throughout like she was running out of [not finding] words. Another told us about hard experiences with her parents.

After the sessions, they shared what they liked about an RC session. Most of them mentioned eye contact, attention, listening without interruption, and all that they noticed. One said she liked that everyone was looking at her and held her hands. We closed with what we liked about ourselves and another person.

For me, that marked the end of underestimating the capabilities of children when it comes to sessions and classes. I was amazed at their memory and the feelings they could access. I could feel with them.

The children at the compound continue to use RC tools in their day-to-day lives, especially confidentiality. When one tells something confidential and others let it out [repeat it], they let me know. When they are playing, one person talks at a time—if not, I hear about it.

The children are a good RC and family work team. They grasp things fast. They also have distresses that need to be discharged so they won't be boxed in by distress recordings as they grow up. Helping them use the tools of RC is one of the biggest joys of my life.

ONLINE SESSIONS

My most reliable weekly sessions are every Monday online, with Co-Counselors who are over seven hours and 17,000 kilometers away. We have worked hard to keep and build this connection taking into consideration the time difference, people's availability, and other factors. I treasure the sessions. My counselors encourage me to share my feelings, and I discharge a lot! When my feelings are negative, I get to work on them and leave them there. Then I am able to think rationally about a situation and the persons involved.

Naume Atunu
Acting Area Reference
Person for Gulu, Uganda
Gulu, Uganda

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



KIRSTEN JOHNSON

All print subscriptions to *Present Time* begin with the next issue published. (Digital subscriptions begin with the current issue.) We can't send back issues as part of a new subscription because we rely on bulk mailings to save money and it costs more to send a single copy. You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 105 and 111 or go to <www.rationalisland.com>).

“Mental Health” Oppression and RC

From a 2009 letter to Tim Jackins from Janet Foner, the then International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation
[Janet died in July 2019]

When we are young people, our discharge process gets buried by young people’s oppression. Later on, in order to take on the adult role, we have to shut down our discharge process even more. “Mental health” oppression comes in and adds an extra layer to what happened to us as young people. And certain groups, such as men, are kept from discharging even more than others.

It all comes down to [is about] it not being okay to be human, to discharge, to show ourselves very much. Everyone carries these hurts. Those of us lucky enough to find RC try to open up, discharge, and show ourselves in sessions and at workshops.

Here are some ways that “mental health” oppression can affect us as Co-Counselors:

TALKING ABOUT RC

How do we talk to people outside of RC about how we have early hurts, how we cry and shake and rage about them, and how we do so in public at workshops? We may feel uncomfortable talking about these things unless we have discharged about it quite a bit. What we do in RC is perfectly natural to human beings, but it’s the opposite of what “we are supposed to do” in society. According to society, early hurts are something that “mental patients” and therapy clients, not “normal” people, have.

Occasionally spending a few minutes describing one’s childhood might be acceptable, but spending hours crying about a particular incident can seem “crazy” to most people. Yet this is what we RCers do. It can be embarrassing for us to talk about RC partly because we are talking about something that is

partly because of what comes into RC from “mental health” oppression—but the ideal Co-Counselor behaves very differently from a therapist.)

BEING CLIENT AND COUNSELOR

Fundamentals students often believe that they are doing RC to “fix” themselves, that RC is therapy that will help them become “normal.” This can affect their willingness to show their struggles in RC classes and sessions and make them reluctant to discharge. Later, as their chronic distresses surface in intense sessions or they regain their ability to discharge, they may fear “losing it” [losing control] and be timid about discharging as much as they need to, or they might stop bringing up certain material.

When babies cry, they often cry for a long time—long past when most adults can listen to them well. An adult crying that long is vulnerable to being labelled “mentally ill” or at least having the people around them get very restimulated. As RCers, we tend to shorten or lengthen the amount of time we cry depending on how safe we feel with a particular counselor. It can depend on how long we’ve known the counselor; how much we trust them; how much we’ve been affected by various oppressions, especially “mental health” oppression, that hold back discharge; and



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“strange” to most people and we don’t want them to think of us as “not normal.”

Also, when we talk about “Re-evaluation Counseling” and “clients, counselors, and counseling,” we are using words that to most people indicate therapy, even though what we do is not therapy. Few people who haven’t experienced an RC session would understand what we mean by “counselor” and “client.” They wouldn’t understand that the counselor and client work together using both minds and that the client is in charge of the session. (Some RCers do get confused and give advice—

how much we've discharged on how these oppressions have affected us. Even Co-Counselors who have been clienting for many years can find it hard to show certain distresses and feelings.

If a person can't get their attention out after a session, they and their Co-Counselors and the RC Community around them may fear that they have "lost it." People's undischarged fear can exacerbate the situation, making it difficult for them to be relaxed and think well about the person. Unfamiliarity with "mental health" liberation or the work on getting and staying present may make it hard for the person to make the best use of sessions and Co-Counselors. The rest of the Community may not know what to do, and the person may end up on the fringes of the Community or leaving RC.

Some RCers have difficulty not being client outside of sessions. Others, fearing they will be client outside of sessions, tend to be very careful and keep a close watch on what they are saying. This can keep them from going "all out" [proceeding without restraint] and discharging what they need to in their sessions.

Being a client is sometimes seen as being a victim. Being a counselor is often valued more. This reflects how clients and counselors are looked upon in the wide world.

It may also be annoying if someone with a "helping pattern" is continually trying to be counselor. When we're recruiting people into RC, it is always good not to counsel them without their agreement.

If we want to reclaim our ability to discharge fully, we may find it useful to have sessions on how we feel about being client and

counselor. This will also help us recruit people and have more tolerance for people who attempt to be client or counselor outside of sessions.

RECRUITING WORKING-CLASS PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR

Some of the patterns discussed above can get in the way when we try to recruit working-class people and people of color into RC. Middle-class "normal" patterns often keep middle-class people—a majority of RCers—quiet, scared, and shy around working-class people and people of color. Also, working-class people and people of color tend to be more forthcoming about what they think and feel, which can make them seem "unacceptable" or "not normal" to white middle-class people. Discharging on "normality" will help white middle-class people move out of this difficulty.

THE NEED TO BE COVERT

When we as RCers get together to Co-Counsel, we make sure we are in a secluded place, and we use pillows to muffle the sound because discharging as loudly as we need to can restimulate other people into assuming that something is "wrong" with us (or we assume that they will assume that). It is true that RCers have on occasion discharged hard in public places and that others have not been upset. But what I've heard about that, they have had to do it confidently and relaxedly for others to find it acceptable.

The fact that we have to think about covertness at all is an indication of the depths of "mental health" oppression in society. Something is askew when the natural healing process has to be covert.



YUKO HIBINO

Since discharging is part of human nature, we should be able to discharge anywhere, as loudly as we want to, and have no one think it odd. In fact, instead of looking at us strangely, ignoring us, or worse, people ought to come pay attention to us and give us a session.

"MENTAL HEALTH" OPPRESSION AND RC LEADERSHIP

"Mental health" oppression can combine with classism to make it hard for RC leaders to get good sessions. Leaders may be perceived as being "perfect" and thus have less space to show themselves and discharge. The "bigger" their title is, the less they may feel they can show themselves to their constituencies and the more "normal" they may feel they should be.

"Mental health" liberation leaders are an exception to this. They usually get good sessions from the people they lead, as there is less pressure on them to appear "normal." In taking on the role of "mental health" liberation leader, they are usually admitting that they are a "mental health" system survivor and have had a hard time.

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TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

RC WORKSHOPS

Many people feel terrified coming to their first “mental health” liberation workshop, partly because the oppression feels heavy and partly because they are afraid of the feelings that could surface. (Once they are at the workshop, they often feel much safer there than anywhere else to have those feelings and to talk to others about their “mental health” histories and other things that they ordinarily don’t talk about.) People attending their first RC workshop of any kind, or a workshop that challenges their patterns a lot, can feel similarly terrified. This is another indication of how “mental health” oppression can hold back RCers from fully using RC.

At “mental health” liberation workshops, it feels safer to work on things, because “mental health” oppression is being directly contradicted the entire weekend. Also, publicly identifying as members of various “mental health” oppression constituencies helps people to realize (1) that they are not the only one with a particular kind of “mental health” history and (2) that virtually everyone has some “mental health” connection that they ordinarily don’t reveal. For example, they might be a relative of a “mental health” system survivor or have tried, or wanted, to commit suicide. Those who don’t have any “mental health” identities can see that they have still been hurt by “mental health” oppression—for

example, by being made afraid of “going crazy” or made to feel like they have to “look normal.”

WORKING ON “MENTAL HEALTH” LIBERATION

Working on “mental health” liberation together in a group seems to open the way for people to show themselves more, discharge more, and also be less scared around ex-psychiatric inmates. It is similar to working on early sexual memories. With both, it is often best to work in a three-way session, or with even more people than that.

By continuing to work on “mental health” liberation, we will make it easier for both RCers and non-RCers to open up more, show who they are more, and discharge more.



ROB VENDERBOS



YUKO HIBINO

Teaching a Fundamentals Class Online

I have been teaching a fundamentals class online for six weeks now. Thirteen new people and eight experienced people are participating. The class came after an online introduction to RC that twenty-eight people attended. Each class participant is connected to two experienced RCers.

From the start I assigned the partners for mini-sessions and out-of-class sessions. Until new people become confident in the process and safe with both process and each other, this seems the best way to go about it [to do it]. I explained that they will probably be choosing their own partners in the future. As the class has gained confidence, we've started doing some random mini-sessions along with the assigned ones.

The assistant and I partnered new students with experienced people for the in-class mini-sessions as well as for the out-of-class sessions. The experienced RCer answered questions about the process. Each week, the assistant teacher (who knows the people well) and I have had a planning session to work out the assignments, ensuring that everyone in the class gets to connect.

People exchanged ten minutes in the first week, and by week three, twenty to thirty minutes each way.

During week three, I put new students with each other for the first time in a short in-class mini-session. New students will also Co-Counsel with each other in their out-of-class sessions. Each will also be assigned an experienced Co-Counsellor for a longer session.

As the session time out of class becomes longer, and people are becoming more relaxed and confident, some are starting to ask others for sessions. Each week I encourage them to reach out to others. This is happening.

Most of the class members are working irregular hours. For those who are unable to attend class, I record it (except for the demonstrations and mini-sessions) and send them the recording.

After each class, I send people information about the topic we have just covered, along with other articles and the link to the RC website. I am using the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline for Pioneer Communities* to guide me in choosing the materials. We have done some work in class on restimulations about reading, trusting, and counselling.

Pamela Mears
Kingston, Tasmania, Australia
Reprinted from the e-mail
discussion list for RC teachers

Sessions and Literature in Online RC Classes

Hi RC teachers!

Does anyone have thoughts about the following?

- I'm not sure how to set up Co-Counseling sessions in an online setting. I can send people into breakout rooms to schedule them or rely on them to do it outside of class—but this is always a little iffy [unreliable] with new or even experienced people.

- I'm teaching a three-week class. I haven't emphasized setting up listening times outside of class. I think people can get a sense of what RC is about by experiencing it in class without having to make a bigger time commitment, without knowing much. I'm also reluctant to push people to share their contact information with each other when they are meeting online.

- What about access to RC literature? I'd rather not mail books out to everyone. Has anyone put together a syllabus with links to articles that are online?

Thank you!

Nancy Faulstich
Watsonville, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail
discussion list for RC teachers



Making Basic RC Literature More Accessible

Dear Nancy and all [see articles on previous page],

Rational Island Publishers is working on how to make the basic RC literature more accessible to everyone during this time (and after). In the meantime, a few suggestions:

You can find *The Human Side of Human Beings* here: <<https://www.rc.org/publication/theory/contents>>.

The Art of Listening is here: <https://www.rc.org/page/individualptarticles/pt46_48_hj>.

Here is the publication: *How to Begin RC*: <https://www.rc.org/publication/pamphlets/how_to_begin_rc>.

Here is the "Welcome Message to New Co-Counselors from Tim Jackins": <<https://www.rc.org/page/home/welcome>>.

Here are some audio introductions from Harvey Jackins and Tim Jackins: <<https://www.rc.org/publication/books/hshb/audio>>.

If you have a copy of *The Fundamentals Teaching Guide*, all of the articles referred to in that publication are now on-

line and available to you and your students here: <<https://www.rc.org/publication/ftg/readings/contents>>.

Articles by Category can be found here: <<https://www.rc.org/tile/articles>>.

Many of the key articles going back to 1975 can be found here: <<https://www.rc.org/page/individualptarticles/contents>>.

You can also use the "search" function on the RC website to look for individual articles. Most of the old issues of *Present Time* are online as PDFs, but you have to search through the PDF to find the article. Let us know what you want that isn't out there. (We're working on the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual* and *The Human Situation*.)



Diane Shisk
Alternate International Reference
Person for the RC Communities
Shoreline, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail
discussion list for RC teachers

The Counselor You Need Is the One You Are Going to Train

What's the reality? You are surrounded by people wildly eager to become good counselors for you if you will just do what is necessary to train them to be good counselors for you.

Should you have to do that? Not in any reasonable world. Of course not. They should be waiting for you when you are born. Were they? No. Everybody did their best, but there aren't any good counselors waiting for you anywhere. The hard line has to be true, that the counselor you want and need is the one that you yourself are going to train to counsel you well.

Harvey Jackins
From page 139 of "Advanced
Re-emergence," in *A Better World*

Teaching a Fundamentals Class on Zoom

I started a weekly RC fundamentals class on March 5 near Boston, Massachusetts, USA. We got off to a great start with eight new students, my assistant, and myself. The situation regarding COVID-19 rapidly evolved over the following few days, and it did not make sense for us to gather in person. In the time between the first and second class I learned how to use Zoom, had a Zoom session, and participated in a Zoom class.

I had to work on a lot of feelings about technology and not having the connection and feedback you get from physical contact. I also had to work on looking at myself while I spoke! I had many good sessions on internalized female and age oppression and my physical appearance! I have since learned I can hide my image of myself while others can still see me. But I'm thinking now that I might want to keep looking at myself and working on the feelings about my appearance so I can be completely delighted with my appearance.

I was unsure if I could teach the Zoom class. It seemed like it would be so difficult for people to feel connected and learn RC theory when not physically together. But also I did not want my fears and embarrassment about my looks to prevent me from teaching the class. I decided to try the class on Zoom. If it was a failure, I could postpone it until we could meet again in person.

The class was a great success! The students loved it. We all connected. We laughed a lot about someone's cat climbing on her and taking up the screen. Then we were introduced to someone else's dog. People were on their beds, in their pajamas, on the floor of their

rooms, and so on. We got to see each other's homes and beautiful faces!

We took a short break in the middle for people to stretch and take their eyes off the computer. It was challenging leading and managing the breakout rooms for mini-sessions, but several people offered to take over that function for future classes.

People took turns talking about their first sessions as counselor and client. Two people discharged on hard events that had happened during the week, and others sent them little messages on the chat feature while they were clienting, such as, "I'm with you," and "Thank you for being so open and brave," and "You are good." I would never have thought of using the chat feature for that purpose, but it was a great way for the client to notice that

everyone was paying attention to them and was really with them as they were discharging.

At the end of the class many of the students commented on how nice it was to be together, because they had been spending a lot of time alone. They felt connected to each other. I told them they may be the first Zoom graduating class in Boston!

I feel I am going to learn a lot about how to communicate caring and contradict isolation using remote communication. We are in a time now when it will be good for us to figure out every way possible to stay in good human communication.

Anne Greenwald

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



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Leading an Allies-to-Catholics Gather-in



I feel excited and hopeful after leading an allies-to-Catholics gather-in for East Los Angeles, California, USA, on Zoom. Five of us attended, including one person with some Catholic heritage.

To prepare, I read some excellent articles on Catholic liberation by Joanne Bray, the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics. (And I noticed how many excellent articles are at my fingertips on the RC website!)

Two thirds of the world's Catholics are from colonized countries. As allies, we need to discharge on colonization, racism, and genocide. Being allies to Catholics is also interwoven with being allies to Indigenous people, many of whom have Catholic heritage.

First, I gave the Co-Counselor with Catholic heritage some one-way time. Next, I read Joanne Bray's history of Catholicism. Then everyone did a mini-session on

their earliest memories of religion. I learned something new about each person's religious background. I think working on religion needs more attention in RC.

I noticed how deeply I love my Catholic family members and friends. I also noticed how I sometimes act in oppressive ways toward them—for example, I have taken advantage of their generosity of spirit.

I look forward to discharging more on my early experiences of religion (I was raised Protestant) and on colonization and genocide. I look forward to seeing what moves in my mind and relationships.



Carrie Lincourt
Los Angeles, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for leaders of Catholics

Surprised by How Much I Like Zoom

I have led a few classes and meetings on Zoom. I am surprised by how much I like it. It is great to see each other.

Often the quality of Zoom is quite good so you can really see the other people. We have found different ways to make it fun—for instance, the renaming function can create fun situations, and changing the background can be funny, too. We have been able to make real contact and in sessions reach for each other and discharge deeply.

In my country, due to the coronavirus, we are not allowed to touch other people at all, only people we live with. But as I live on my own [by myself], I haven't touched anybody for two weeks now. No hugs, no holding hands, nothing. Yesterday in a session on Zoom I imagined hugging my counselor and I could cry deeply. I remembered what it has been like when we have hugged each other, and I thought about how hugging is a mutual action. Sometimes it is one person hugging the other, but most often we human beings hug each other. So beautiful.

Trine Maribo Carstensen
Copenhagen, Denmark
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC teachers

Some Amendments to the *Guidelines*, for RC Online Events

Due to the situation created by COVID-19, we have amended the Guidelines (in the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*) regarding RC workshop, class, support group, and playday finances, to address the online form of these events. See <www.rc.org/guidelines_online_events>.



AQUEDUCT, IN PONT DU GARD, FRANCE • PAMELA PERROT

An Online Family Class for Young Teenagers

I led our family class of six young teens (twelve to fourteen years old) online last week. It was a great success. We have been meeting together since most of them were very young, so the relationships are strong. People were delighted to simply see each other's faces. The online format made it possible for some to be present who hadn't been in class recently due to illness or work schedules.

A class member with a Zoom account helped people get situated with the technology fifteen minutes before our formal start. We shortened our normal two-and-a-half-hour class to two hours. We used the following format:

6:00: We shared things that are good, mediocre, and/or crappy [awful] in our lives (we've used this form of check-in for months as we've gathered over dinner—the group is attached to it).

6:30: We played an online game together (we asked people in advance to think of games that might work).

6:45: Parents and young people did special time (offline) while allies discharged in break-out groups.

7:15: Young people and allies came back together online for more games while parents had mini-sessions on the phone. (Example of a game: someone offers a truly disgusting gift with great love, and the recipient has to refuse the gift with heartfelt thanks. Another game: someone puts an object so close to the computer screen that it can't be identified then gradually moves it back until somebody accurately calls out what it is.)

7:45: Parents came back online. We broke into parent/young person/ally three-way sessions in break-out rooms. We had one minute each of self-appreciation, and in closing everybody shared a highlight of the evening. (We've usually included a ten- or fifteen-minute class with a topic and longer mini-sessions toward the end of the evening, but we decided that that was too much for this online experiment.)

The following is feedback about the class:

Young person: I liked doing the introductions and special time and the game with the allies and young

people together (while the parents did sessions together). I liked everything, and that is one thing.

Parent: I liked getting to play and laugh in the group and connect in a session with another parent via videoconference. What a contradiction [to distress] to be reminded about the value of play and that it can happen anywhere at any time! Being together on our phones is super easy and fun to make happen!

Another parent: My young person was in such a good mood after family class tonight—close, connected, delighted to show off [display, flaunt] chanting the Torah, excited about things she is looking forward to, and happy to share “good thoughts” from the day at bedtime. We agreed that getting together online is not as good as being physically together but that, given these scary and isolating times, meeting in a Zoom class was an important contradiction for us!

Pamela Haines
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of family work

An RC Class Based on the U.S. Election

I recently taught an ongoing class on the U.S. elections and the climate crisis. I thought it was important to set a light tone, so I started class by telling some short non-oppressive political jokes. We then took turns reading a post on the topic.

I said that we know that any feelings we have about this election are old. We know old feelings can be discharged, but we don't know what will happen after we discharge the feelings. Where will discharge lead us? This to me is an exciting prospect. I also said that we discharge so that we can make the most rational choices possible at the present time about (1) who to vote for, (2) how and how much to be involved in the election, (3) how to talk to people about our thoughts, including thoughts about the climate crisis, and (4) how to listen to people.

We then had a mini-session. I suggested that we start by discharging old material [distress]—for example, feelings about our family's involvement in politics or about past elections—or go wherever our mind took us on this topic. After the mini-session, each person spoke briefly about where their mind had taken them.

We took a play and movement break (with more jokes) and then read the second half of the post. We stayed together as a group to discharge about the questions that were raised. For a closing, each person mentioned any insights or re-evaluations they'd had after discharge. Here are some of the comments:

- The space to express my feelings openly and explore my thinking on this topic was a contradiction [to distress]. I had been hearing many opinions about the election. After discharge, I had more attention and interest in listening to people. I also noticed that I can take a more active role in sharing my own thinking.
- My mom had been adamant in her opinions. She had known she was right. There had been no room for anyone else's opinions. So, I had decided to be neutral. I hadn't cared about politics. But it turns out [happens that] I do have a lot of opinions.
- I hide from a lot of the news because I'm afraid to feel the early discouragement I felt in my family. After discharge, I feel more energized and that more is possible.
- I don't want to listen to people whose opinions are different from mine because I'm afraid they will think



VENICE, ITALY • JO PERRY

I'm agreeing with them, and then I will not have shown who I really am. It feels like an annihilation of myself. I think a lot of this stems from being a raised-working-class Catholic woman who was not expected to have opinions of her own.

- My reluctance to speak up is tied in with sexism. First, there's the feeling that I have to represent women, that I have to show that women can be articulate in expressing their views, and that if I am not articulate I will have done a disservice to women. Second is how difficult it is to listen to white men when they state their views authoritatively.

- Trump restimulates being in elementary school and observing bullies. He restimulates early discouragement. Sexism is a huge part of it.

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for USA political issues

Many New People Leading

In my RC Region (Washington, D.C., USA) everyone has access to the Internet. Classes and support groups went online several weeks ago. We purchased a Zoom account for Community use and are asking for voluntary contributions to cover the cost.

People we haven't seen in years are showing up [appearing] online, including parents, people with serious health issues, and people who lack easy access to transportation. It is clear that we have unawaresly excluded people from certain oppressed groups, and it's good to correct that.

We have a special project for encouraging connection: getting people to discharge together on the topics that matter most to them. I sent an e-mail inviting people to say which groups they wanted.

As might be expected, hardly anybody read the letter. So, we had people discharge on each paragraph in their classes. Within two days, fifty-four topics were suggested for the online groups. We don't have that many active RCers in the city!

The only way to convene so many groups has been for lots of people to take a turn leading. I recently met with the first eight people who stepped up [wanted to do it]. They are mostly not certified RC teachers. For some, it will be their first stab [attempt] at leading. Some are in the particular constituency, and some are allies. They will lead groups for people in their twenties and thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, and seventies; hourly workers; people who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19; and for working on early distress. I'm excited that so many people are

getting a chance to try leading and doing it in a cohort with other new and experienced leaders.

Here are the important parts of the letter I sent to the Washington, D.C., Community:

The COVID-19 pandemic is happening at a time when the oppressive systems in our country are already spinning out of control. This crisis offers unique opportunities—to work on our early material [distress] and to take steps to guide our society in new, rational, and life-sustaining directions. In order to do this, we need to stay close and continue to deepen our relationships while we are physically separated. We are fortunate to have the technology enabling us to surmount the separation.

The current situation is bringing up all kinds of feelings—early fears about health and the health of loved ones, longings for “normalcy,” distresses attached to survival and death, and so on. We need to keep working on these feelings in order to free our attention and think clearly about the things we need and want to think about. Let's keep having sessions, mini-sessions, online classes, and so on, to make sure no one gets isolated and everyone gets a chance to keep discharging. Emily Wilson [the Area Reference Person for the New Washington, D.C., Area] and I will be working with leaders in both Areas to support all efforts to keep us connected.

At this time, oppressive forces are clamping down on many populations, and the usual opportunistic systems of economic exploitation are finding ways to take advantage of the crisis. Racism, classism, able-bodiedism, ageism, anti-Jewish op-

pression, and so on, are showing up [appearing] and having dire consequences for the groups they target. Those of us not in the targeted groups are being encouraged to “go small” and try to protect ourselves rather than come together in unity with all people to make sure we get through this together.

[We will be starting] a series of online gatherings for people in targeted groups and for those in the position of agent of oppression. Some of the calls may be led by me, some by others. I look forward to us having as much online contact with as many people as possible, in as many configurations as we can figure out!

Jevera Temsky
Regional Reference Person
for Washington, D.C., USA,
and Area Reference Person for
the Washington, D.C., 1 Area
Washington, D.C., USA

Reprinted from the RC
e-mail discussion list for
Regional Reference Persons



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Backing Frontline Workers

*Excerpts from a notice to the Boston, Massachusetts, USA,
RC Communities about setting up a support group for frontline workers*

Dear Regional leaders:

We are rapidly organizing a Regional support group of frontline workers who are at greater risk of exposure to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please “reply all” in the next twenty-four hours with the contact information for frontline workers (other than health care workers—they are being organized separately) in your Community.

Let’s quickly collect the names and e-mail addresses of frontline workers—including people who are currently working in jobs where they are face-to-face with members of the public and/or risk contact with COVID-19 on the job (grocery store workers, clerks, baristas, people working in restaurants doing takeout, sanitation workers, firefighters, public safety workers, security guards, personal care workers, child care workers, elder care workers, and so on).

We also need to put together a list of people in our Region whose jobs and ability to earn a living has been heavily impacted by COVID-19 (daycare workers, domestic workers, hairdressers, workers in nail salons, artists, and so on).

Let’s keep discharging on how COVID-19 is affecting us, the feelings it brings up, how our government and societies are currently responding to this crisis, and how we continue to live and limit the spread. Let’s continue to think about the disparate and particular impacts on different groups and communities. Let’s rapidly organize and agitate to ensure that as a state and nation we are doing everything possible to reduce risk, protect public health, and prioritize each human life. I am pleased with how we are staying connected, discharging, and thinking.

LATER

There is now a support group for the nine frontline workers. The three who are RC leaders are supporting each other as they take turns leading the group.

It is important for people to connect with similarly situated workers and discharge together on the following:

- Asking, “Does it make sense for me to go to work?”
- Finding ways to free up the attention of those who are risking exposure and are not properly protected on the job so they can protect themselves and each other
- Holding back the crush of capitalism and creating something new that is no longer based on exploitation and oppression
- Thinking about and leading, organizing, and agitating for workers’ rights to safe working conditions and to change everything.

*Jennifer Wexler
Regional Reference Person for Boston
and Southeast Massachusetts, USA
Canton, Massachusetts, USA*

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for
Regional Reference Persons, Area Reference Persons,
RC teachers, and RC Community members





CHILE • © STAN EICHNER

Helping Young People Fight for Themselves

At two recent family workshops, young people asked me why their parents hadn't supported them in getting a diagnosis that would allow them to get drugs—to make it possible for them to function better in school. They said some of their friends had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, were taking drugs, and were getting additional help with schoolwork.

Parents have often asked me this question, but this is the first time that young people have asked. One of the parents talked to her son, X—, about challenging his fears and doing regular sessions with her instead of going on drugs. The school psychologist had been promoting the drugs, but after X— had a good session with his mom, he told the psychologist he thought his mom had good thinking and a good idea.

As societal challenges increase, more efforts will be made to make money off of people's fears by offering quick personal ways to feel better. People are being asked to prioritize how they feel and to seek personal happiness instead of organizing to change the negative things they are experiencing.

But this is not just about personal struggles. What we really need to do is address the diminishing support for teachers, schools, and families. In a system that worked, there would be enough resource to think about each individual's learning style and assist each person to flourish—without drugs.

We also need to offer a picture of reality:

- Facing and discharging fear makes clear thinking and action possible and is preferable to numbness. Feelings of fear, loneliness, and discouragement are mostly from past undischarged hurts, not from the present.
- All of us did the best we could in the past and made the best choices we could. However, aware support and discharge were not available in our early struggles. This does not have to be the situation now. We can find support and go back and feel and discharge the early hurts. This is not easy, especially if we see people “succeeding” in the short term by numbing themselves. But deciding to feel and discharge is the clear path to freedom.

(If one chooses to get a diagnosis in order to get extra help, they need to understand that they are doing it to avoid being more oppressed, not because there is anything wrong with their mind. And they need to remain firm against taking drugs.)

Chuck Esser
International Commonality
Reference Person for Family Work
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail
 discussion list for leaders of parents

“Your Children Are Fine Just the Way They Are”

Hello parents,

These days the pressure on us as parents is enormous. The society tells us that our children must be “successful” by standards that often don’t make sense. We are told that our children must get good grades, must be “well-behaved,” look a particular way, and so on, or they will not have good lives. Additionally, parents’ oppression sends messages that if our children don’t achieve and act in prescribed ways, it reflects badly on us and we are bad parents.

Each of our children is just perfect as they are. Yes, they will all have struggles, and we can help them with them. We have RC. We have discharge. So, we can be close to our children, play with them, and listen to them. We want them to know we are on their side. It doesn’t mean we go along with [agree with]

their patterns, but it does mean we communicate that they are okay, that they are good, and that we like them—just the way they are. We can get closer when things get hard for them.

Our children do not need chemicals in their bodies that interfere with the natural functioning of their brains. Their brains are okay. They may decide they want good grades, or they may want to set goals for themselves in school, but they have all the tools they need to achieve those goals. Figuring out how to struggle against our distresses to achieve our goals is one of the more exciting and interesting things about growing from a child into a grown-up. It strengthens us and makes us happy. It helps us understand that we were born with this ability—to struggle to achieve our goals.

As adults, we get daily messages that we need either prescribed or unprescribed drugs, or alcohol, to be okay. We are told we need them to achieve goals, to “relax and enjoy life,” or to hold back discharge.

Discharge is seen as a “problem,” a weakness, or a sign of something inherently wrong with us, rather than a way to heal and be human. This is “mental health” oppression. All of us need to discharge on the bombardment of messages that have come at us since we were little, messages saying we are not okay as we are and that discharge is not a good thing.

It would be good for us to discharge on memories of taking drugs (prescribed or unprescribed) that affected our brains and on drinking alcohol. It’s a great topic for a parents’ support group. If we currently take drugs or consume alcohol, we need to find counselors who can listen without judging us so we can be open about our struggles. We need to discharge on the pressures on us as adults to take drugs, and the pressures on us and our children to take drugs in order to “succeed.” The more we discharge on this, the more we will be able to hold out reality to our children and help them fight for reality. This will be helpful preparation for when they get older, when society offers them drugs and alcohol as a form of pseudo-liberation.

Schools, like all institutions, have been set up according to values of capitalism, not according to the needs of young humans. Young people’s oppression is built in to schools. As parents, we have to figure out how to help our children get the best out of the resources that schools offer but also how to fight the oppression that comes at them.

You are good parents, and your children are good. Your children are fine just the way they are.

Marya Axner
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



MARGO HITTLEMAN

A Question about Birth Trauma

Dear fellow parents,

One of my children (now fourteen) experienced a traumatic birth. She aspirated blood into her lungs and was born looking lifeless. She needed to be immediately revived by a team of respiratory doctors. She spent her first week in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). She didn't have enough strength to move or eat. She was fed through tubes even as I offered breastfeeding.

I have told her that she spent time in the NICU after birth (as did one of her siblings) but have played it down [made it seem unimportant], kept it light, and never gone into specifics. She has had a lot of big feelings all her life. She feels pain at the state of the world—poverty and climate change have been crushing to her since she was old enough to speak. She feels a lot of anger and frustration and considers herself an unhappy person. She is also sensitive to light and sound and experiences a lot of social anxiety—she doesn't believe she has ever actually had a friend and isn't sure how to talk with people. Her writing is dystopian [about an imaginary society that is dehumanizing and unpleasant] and concerns girls suffering greatly.



I worry about her! She used to discharge with me a lot; my bed was where she came if she needed to have big feelings. Then we would hug afterward and be close. Now she is less inclined to directly express feelings by crying, shaking, yelling, or throwing things, though she talks *about* her feelings. She is also openly loving with the family.

I am wondering if I should talk with her more about her birth trauma. I'm afraid of it landing on her as yet another confirmation of what she thinks of as her "dark soul." She is not having sessions with me (I am the only counselor she's had, and I've only been in RC since she was ten). I don't want her to have to face this alone. I'm not sure if talking in more detail with her about her birth trauma would be helpful or potentially harmful.

I am open to your thoughts and experiences.

Thanks so much,

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents

Helping My Daughter

I am so sorry that this happened to your daughter and you. [See previous article.] It is wonderful that she can openly express love to you—that's a big deal [very important].

My daughter (now thirteen) had significant pre-birth traumas. She struggles with anxiety and learning disabilities that I believe are a result of multiple ultrasounds in utero. She is determined to re-emerge. Much of the time she tries to show how victimized she feels and to control things around her, out of fear.

There are a number of pieces to her story. She's known about some of the more benign parts (for example, that I was on three months of total bedrest) since she was pretty [quite]

young. When she turned nine or so, I began telling her more bits of the story as they came up. I, too, worried that they would reinforce her sense of something being wrong with her, that she was "broken"—but it seemed important to keep talking about it.

I've tried hard not to assume that I know what the specific distress recordings are from these events, but I do have guesses. I've explained that the events affected her and that her current struggles are connected to hard things that happened to her then. I've also gotten a lot more intentional about reminding her that the big sessions she has, and the feelings she has in them, are connected to those events and that they are not "all of who she is." We can sometimes focus on helping young

people discharge without remembering to give them RC theory, including that feelings are not who we are and are not guides to action.

What I'm most proud of is that I invented a celebration that commemorates a day during the pregnancy when we got important information about her survival. She gets to choose how we celebrate (usually we go somewhere to eat), and each time I tell the story of that day. Each year I think about whether she's ready to hear more of the story. The celebration helps me remember to do that.

"Susannah Foxworthy"
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents



Helping Our Son



Dear anonymous parent [see first article on previous page],

I wanted to write to you because my son also had a traumatic birth. He was fighting for his life and had a long neonatal intensive care unit stay. It was so hard—for him, for me, for his dad. First, I want to say I am so sorry this happened. It's hard to experience these things in the first few days and weeks of life.

It sounds like you have been there for many tears and much closeness through the years, and that's wonderful. It's a good foundation. And your daughter has shown her feelings and wanted help—that's good!

My son is ten now. We started talking to him about his birth as honestly as possible as early as he started asking about it. We would give just little bits of information and continue only as he asked. Some of the questions we didn't know how to answer. (We don't know exactly why he was struggling as much as he was when he was born—but breathing did not come immediately, and he was intubated and suffered brain injuries. We don't know why, and neither does he.)

I had to discharge a lot of heartbreak after the talks with him. He wanted to hear beautiful stories about how wonderful it was when he was born. And then he would find out that he was separated from us, intubated, and on life support for days.

Maybe once per year he wants the whole story. Each time he starts to remember the last time we talked about it. The talks have been a slow process of un-occlusion.

Occasionally we have initiated telling the story, when he is clearly facing some hard things and we want to remind him of his power or give him a chance to do more direct work on it (mostly through play and roughhousing with us). We have only continued talking about it (or playing about it) if he perks up and starts asking questions or making it into a game.

We try not to editorialize too much, just give him facts. We wonder aloud what it must have been like for him and see what he thinks.

We have tried to give him a balance of attention, by talking about how incredibly wonderful and amazing it is that he is here, that he was born. We say that it is and was a joyous thing, and also that it was one of the hard-

est things because of the early struggle. We talk about how powerful he was and how powerfully he healed and is still healing. We talk a lot about how proud we are of him, sometimes with tears ourselves. I can hardly ever tell the story without crying. But I think that's been okay for him to see.

We tell him that even though it was hard, he learned a lot about healing; that he is aware of himself as someone who can overcome challenges; and that some of his strengths come from having prevailed at such a tender age. He had significant disabilities early on, and he's made tremendous recovery over the years. There are still some struggles, physically and emotionally, yet he has set a precedent in his life of setting his mind to healing and winning.

Perhaps for your daughter the information will not only give her a context for her struggles but also some perspective on her power and strength and the chance to write her own story and choose her perspectives on it.

I think it's been good for our son to have the information. When he was younger, he would make up games in which he was clearly trying to work on the birth material [distress]. Like he would crawl out from between my legs and have me scream, "Welcome!" in a thrilled voice. We would do it over and over and over. He would often surprise me with the ways he would find to work with the information.

The thing about sharing the information is that your child will find ways to work with it, ways that you wouldn't think of because of your own distress.

My son still has some struggles that we don't yet know how to help him with. But when we do try to work on things, it is good to have a shared understanding of the birth story as a context and to use it to remind him that he can move through, and has moved through, hard things; that he is good at it.

I will be thinking of you and wishing the best for you and your daughter. She sounds wonderful, deep, and caring. And you are clearly a wonderful parent.

Anonymous
Rhode Island, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents

O Parents, Teachers, and all such Instructors,
Permit them learn.
Each mind is thirsty-eager.
If never blamed, nor scolded, nor negated;
No single "No!" nor "Wrong" to leave confusion;
No disapproving frown to mar affection;
Each grows more thirsty and more eager always.

A little at one time is knowledge's portion
And that related to things known already.
No more until the last has been digested,
Related, understood, communicated
Back in the learner's words to the instructor.
Without this nothing justifies proceeding.

Once understood, new portion offered swiftly
Lest boredom's tarnish dull the mind's quicksilver.
Banish all tests, all grades, all kinds of ratings.
These only rate environment and teacher
And much confuse the learner about learning.

Love openly and well the eager learners
And twice as much the ones whose hurts prevent them.
Loved and approved, they'll find a way to discharge.
Then let them weep and shake and laugh and temper,
And treasure the keenness of the minds emerging.

Harvey Jackins

From the beginning of "The Nature of the Learning
Process," on page 88 of *The Human Situation*



WOODS HOLE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • MARC GOLDRING

if you move . . .

and don't tell us in advance of your address change, it causes a surprising waste of resources. The post office does not forward bulk mail; instead it destroys the undelivered literature. Then we usually receive a notice from the post office saying that you have moved, and we are charged postage due for the notice. This need not happen if you will kindly let us know of your address change with as much advance notice as possible. You can e-mail address changes to <litsales@rc.org>. Thank you!

Rational Island Publishers

Zooming in the Time of Corona

Over the last few weeks I have got used to using Zoom for my sessions, support groups, and workshops. On the one hand, Zoom is an opportunity for connection irrespective of distance. However, I have noticed that for me it takes more work and awareness to keep a balance of attention. I can't touch or feel or smell someone is there. It's harder to know on a deep level that someone is there. I recently experienced working on early distress in a session, which I do if I can, but then getting lost and confused for the rest of the day. We understand that it is important to have a balance of attention. We try to work with our attention away from distress. Just going back and diving into what happened to us can be confusing. We can get lost and not be able to distinguish the present from the past.

In this extraordinary time, we need to be able to discharge in order to think flexibly. So, the questions are, "What do I need to do as a client to really know someone is there?" and "What do I need to do as a counsellor so that my client can really know I'm there?" The biggest contradiction [to distress] is most often the counsellor. Now, in the present, someone is listening, thinking, remembering my goodness and intelligence when I can't remember. But there is a new challenge when I'm seeing and connecting with my counsellor on a screen.

I am taking more time both as counsellor and client to reach through the screen, to really connect. I have to work harder. I am now taking much more time at the beginning of sessions, both as counsellor and client, to notice and establish a real human-to-human connection.

Intelligence, as we use the term in RC, is the ability to think flexibly with each new moment. We have many challenges, many new moments, in this pandemic. It is easy to confuse the "New and Bad" with the "Old and Bad," and easy to feel like there isn't anyone there. The fact is that there wasn't anyone there back then. And the way out, of course, is discharge.

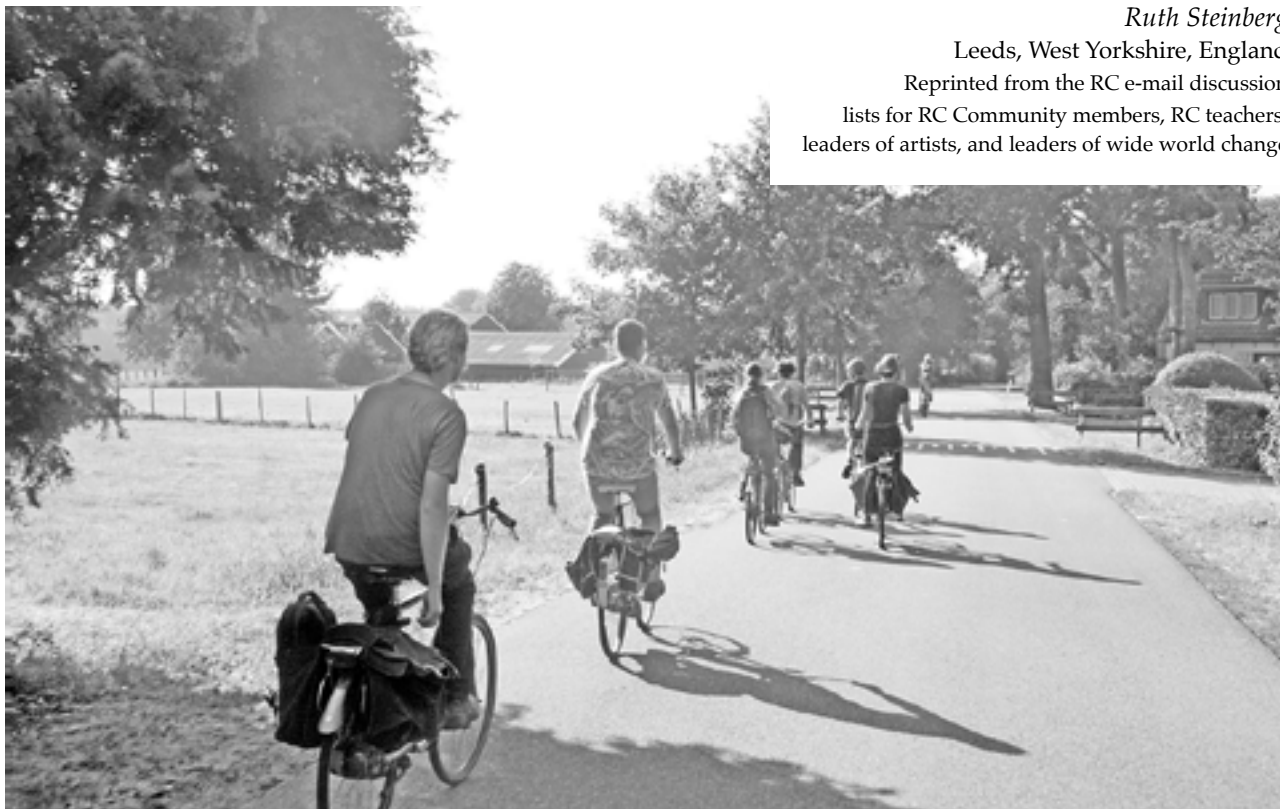
I'd like to know your thoughts and creative ways of being human while counselling in the time of COVID-19.

Ruth Steinberg

Leeds, West Yorkshire, England

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion

lists for RC Community members, RC teachers,
leaders of artists, and leaders of wide world change



ALDEMARDUM, FRYSLÂN, THE NETHERLANDS • ROB VENDERBOS

We Can Be “Big” and Create the Lives We Want

It was empowering to see all of us beautiful and brilliant people at our Zoom meeting. In my mind you all are there in the “Village” (the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshops) that we have built together all these years. Thank you, Barbara (Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People), for leading us and for being a good example of how a woman of African heritage can be. Thank you for inspiring me, for inspiring us, and for reminding us of our goodness, our connection, and how important it is to reach out to others. We know that nothing will be “normal” again. We can be big and create the lives we want.

After the meeting I had a big session. I discharged sadness, fear, and about taking care of my health. I

could remember my goodness and strength and that I’m not alone. I need to keep having sessions and reaching out for that little girl who gave up on herself when she was very young.

Yesterday I led two Zoom meetings, one with the People of the Global Majority in the Netherlands and another with the People of the Global Majority in continental Europe. I encouraged people to feel their sadness, fear, and isolation. We cried about our families living in different countries, far away from us. It was also good to have a hopeful perspective, that we can be big and love ourselves and others.

In my birth island, Curacao, there is also a lockdown. This is hard for many people and certainly for the day laborers, who can’t earn money to buy food. People are hungry. More than twenty-four thousand people from Venezuela are illegally on the island of Curacao, without health-care and without an income. This is hard. My family in Curacao is trying

to support people. People are also afraid that despite the COVID-19 there will be military action toward Venezuela led by the United States and supported by the Netherlands. It is not the kind of fight we want.

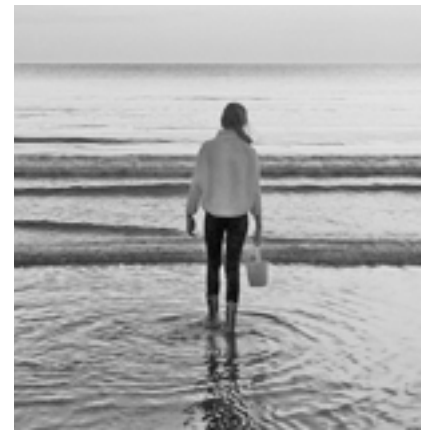
We can discharge and make connection with the hopeful perspective of being big and with each other.

Marlene Melfor

Arnhem, the Netherlands

Reprinted from the

RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of African-heritage people



FILEY, ENGLAND • BESS HERBERT

Thanks to a Native Women’s Zoom Group

Today I feel encouraged, thanks to the Native Women’s Zoom group that Linda Bad Yellow Eyes and ally Joanne Bray organized for those of us outside of an organized RC Area.

Two decades ago, I had no idea how much Marcie Rendon’s introduction to RC would impact me. (Marcie Rendon is the RC International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.) Linda’s invite flyer at Oglala Lakota College Satellite in Rapid City, South Dakota, “hooked” me because it suggested I could change my relationships for the better. At the time I was focused on relationships with my family.

Today I can tell [see] how good attention and RC theory have changed my relationship with myself. My health and my life matter. I know this as I move into an aging and more relaxed body and state of mind.

What a pleasure to be with women from all reaches of the continent. Indigenous women have a beautiful sense of place. It shines in our voices and our eyes as we describe homeland.

The discipline that is needed to survive the pandemic and continue to live with our changed planet is doable—we “got this.” *Wopila* (gratitude) and *pilamayaye* (thank you).

Nancy Kile

Oglala Lakota

Crawford, Nebraska, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of Native Americans and for leaders of women

Online Sessions in the Republic of Guinea

The whole world is currently facing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Our Co-Counseling Community organized three online sessions via WhatsApp. I asked the following questions: What are you afraid of with COVID-19? How do you experience confinement? Members freed themselves from their fears by talking about their anxieties and how they experience the slowdown in activities and confinement. Here are some testimonies:

- Co-Counseling has always been a big help in my life since I started practicing it. Being able to interact with Co-Counseling friends has raised my spirits, especially since I've understood that I am not alone in having problems during this period. I feel more peaceful because I understand that others care about me and vice versa. In the session we could "decompress" from all the pressures related to the information that we receive daily from the media, the authorities, and others.

- This session was of capital importance for me because I was able to unload my fears related to COVID-19. I hope this can continue for the good of all members.

- I liked the session because it allowed me to externalize my problems with this situation that had been "eating my heart" for a while. And it's always a pleasure to chat with Co-Counseling friends. Now I feel freer from my anxieties.

- This session did me so much good. I am happy to hear from Co-Counselors during this period of confinement and distress. I have unloaded well on my fears and now I feel freer.

The sessions ended in a good friendly atmosphere with plans to meet next month.

Mahamadou Cellou Diallo
Conakry, Republic of Guinea



Being Allies to People in Asia

[The e-mail below was written toward the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic.]

I live in Asia where the number of people with COVID-19 is growing daily.

Many of us are now in self-quarantine to protect those at risk. I would like to offer my thinking about how Co-Counselors can support us:

- If you are contacting someone from another country or region, please educate yourself about the situation there. Good information is available. Read the information for a few days and watch the changes.
- Do not expect Co-Counselors in Asia to have slack enough to joke about the situation.
- Do not client on how you think your country "will be safe" because of your geographical location.
- Be prepared to listen to terror; if you cannot listen, please be honest about that.
- Do not assume that the overload on medical resources that happened in China is a specifically "Chinese problem." Be aware that medical systems worldwide could be stretched to the limit.
- Do not client about how lucky you are to get masks, disinfectant, hand sanitizers, and so on. Please know that you are among the fortunate few to have these resources and products.

"Paper, ink and stone"
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change



MITLA, OAXACA, MEXICO • ANTHONY C. ROBLES

Parents: Go Ahead and Find Each Other

Dear parents,

I just got off a Zoom call with parents from Nigeria, Sweden, Hungary, and the United States.

The call was for climate change activists. However, most of the parents needed to first figure out how to adjust to the change in their lives as parents due to COVID-19. What became clear was that parents worldwide were experiencing the same difficulties, and the connection we made with each other was like a salve [a lotion that heals] on a wound.

It was an honor to be on the call. I was moved by what everyone is up against [confronting] right now. All were experiencing similar challenges. All of us were struggling to think about how to keep our children safe, how to keep our parents safe, how to keep connections with other families, and how to wash our children's hands. And how do we explain to our little ones why they can't be close to some of their best friends right now, and close to their grandparents? And how do parents

get work done? And how do we deal with not getting a paycheck?

Being together was reassuring. We cried about how much we love our children and our parents. We cried about how much we love each other. We talked about how to reach out to other parents.

I invite you to write about what you are struggling with and/or what you have figured out.

I would also propose to parents' support group leaders that you call (when you can) a Zoom parents' support group. If you don't have a group, find two other parents and do a three-way Zoom or phone session.

If you have the space in your lives, you might do a Zoom support group with friends from outside of RC. You could tell them that you need some support and that it would help if you could have a few friends listen to you. And then listen to them. I have found that a crisis is a good time to organize.

One of the dads on our Zoom call had been planning to have a "special time" class for parents who don't have the time to commit to RC. He was thinking of not doing it because no one can get together—but I suggested he do it as a Zoom class because this is the perfect time. Many parents would love to have a tool like "special time" right now, when they are home with young people and don't know what to do. They would love to know they are not the only ones going through [experiencing] what they are going through.

Go ahead and find each other.

And remember, you are good parents, and your young people are good.

Love to each of you,

Marya Axner
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
 Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail
 discussion list for leaders of parents

Complete Confidentiality Is Essential

Treating everything that the client says with complete confidentiality is absolutely essential for Co-Counseling—or, for that matter, counseling—to work well and persistently.

Whatever the client says or expresses in any way is in some form an aspect of the client's thinking, even if it is a rehearsal of distress, which the client's intelligence is rehearsing in an effort to bring it to the counselor's attention.

For most of their life, the client has been under some form of pressure of being *told* what to think, and this in itself is deeply hurtful to anyone's intelligence. If the client is making an effort to think in some areas where there has been some distress, this thinking needs to be fully respected and encouraged.

Any discussion (with anyone except the client) of what the client has said or revealed is a basic invalidation of the client's safety. Even if the client themselves demands the opinion of the counselor about something they have said or revealed, the

counselor will do well to be interested and enthusiastic about the client's *saying it* but try as far as possible to be completely non-committal as far as making any judgment about what the client has said, even if the client "insists."

Never bring up or share what the client has said in a session (or turn, in a group) outside of the session, or even in the next session, unless, of course, the client requests that you do so and gives permission for you to do so.

The excuse for breaking this confidentiality toward the client when one is oneself the client in a later session, that "the material has been too upsetting and must be talked about," is just an excuse being offered by a *gossip pattern* or a *gossip compulsion* of the one who is doing it. Any upsets can be discharged by contradiction, not by rehearsing the material or by identifying the source.

Harvey Jackins

From pages 73 to 74 of *The List*



SKY YARBROUGH

Using RC Literature During the Pandemic

In the midst of all the work related to the pandemic, I have tried to remember the usefulness of RC literature. I recently discovered "An Evolving Policy Statement on the Liberation of African-Heritage People" in the RC journal *Black Re-emergence* Number 12. It is filled with outstanding thinking that puts the current situation in perspective.

Once a week I do a telephone session about the RC literature. Reading has never been easy for me. Today I discovered a new way to discharge about early reading distress. I talked about what it was like for me learning to read in elementary school. For some young people, reading was enjoyable, but not for me when I was young. With much discharge, I "listed" activities that I liked more than learning to read:

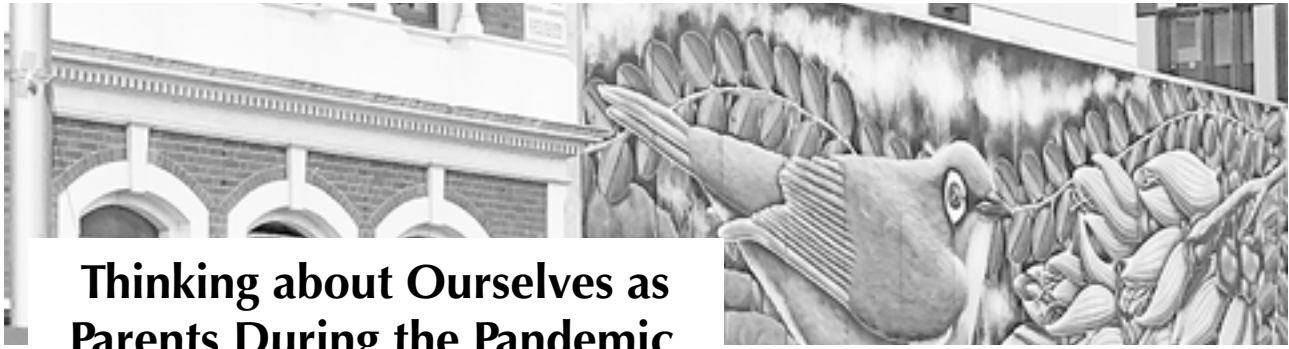
"Being with my friends was more fun than reading."

"Telling jokes was more fun than reading."

"The game of tetherball was more fun than reading."

"Sledding in the snow was more fun than reading."

Steve Brown
Denver, Colorado, USA



Thinking about Ourselves as Parents During the Pandemic

MURAL, IN CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND • LYNDALL KATZ

March 21, 2020

Dear parents,

How do we as parents prioritize our well-being, for both our own sakes and the long-term well-being of our children?

I've been thinking a lot about protecting my parents who are over sixty. This is very important. The majority of people who are dying from COVID-19 are over sixty. There is also data showing that adults under sixty, while not dying at such high rates, are getting sick enough to need hospitalization. Hospitals are either overcrowded already or are expected to become overcrowded. As hospitals become overcrowded, death rates will go up for anyone sick enough to need hospitalization, regardless of age.

As parents raising young children, we are busy. And many of us are now busy handling COVID-19. Every day we are figuring out how to keep our children safe and how to get the food and supplies we need. What does it mean for our children to not be able to play with friends, not see family? How do we ensure our families' survival and well-being in an economic collapse? How do we think about our children's lives without a school for them to go to? And so much more. It can be easy to get in crisis mode and just try to handle things.

And, as parents, it's easy to run ourselves ragged [exhaust ourselves],

feeling like we can sacrifice ourselves for our children, feeling like we have to take care of everyone besides ourselves and that we ourselves aren't vulnerable. But the data show that we are vulnerable. And we are not expendable.

I've been discharging on how much I want my child not to lose a parent during this pandemic. As I discharge, I've also been having new thoughts. For example, it occurred to me that if my child gets a fever, probably one of his parents should stay isolated from him, instead of both of us being with him. This will increase the odds that we parents won't both end up in the hospital, that we won't end up in the hospital at the same time, and that at least one of us will survive this pandemic.

A lot of the virus spread in China was in family clusters. Taking appropriate precautions to isolate within a household when a family member gets sick is important. This is really different from what we've done when our child has gotten sick in the past. We usually stay very close to him when he's sick. Parents already have immunity to many of the childhood illnesses, so we often don't get sick, even when we're close physically with our feverish children. But with COVID-19, none of us have even a little bit of immunity.

Also, in my experience, even when my partner and I have risked catching something from our child,

it's always seemed worth it to have stayed close to him. Having a little cold or even being laid up [in bed] for a week doesn't seem so bad in order to take care of and stay close to one's sick child. And there have been many illnesses when we've all been snuggled up a lot. But both parents being with him isn't worth both of us being hospitalized or intubated or dying. And we'll have to think about the one parent who does take care of him. Do we change how close we're used to [accustomed to] being when he's sick? Do we cuddle less? It's hard for me to imagine, but I know I need to discharge and think more.

These things aren't easy to think about. I'm discharging and trying to think around the edges of my own feelings. But I think it's important to discharge and think as clearly as we can about these issues.

Let's fight for ourselves. Let's be intelligent about ourselves and our health as we also fight for our children, our parents, and everyone. Let's do this because our children need us to stay alive but also just because we matter separate from the work we do and how much we love our children. And the work we do raising our children and how much we love them matters tremendously.

Anonymous
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents



CHRISTINE MARNANE

A Playful Response to Quarreling

I am a single mom. I decided two days ago to put my daughters and myself in quarantine for at least three weeks.

Yesterday my daughters were quarreling, and I was pleased with my playful response:

“Waah, I don’t have anyone to quarrel with!” They laughed and felt connected to each other again.

E—

Germany

Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents

*Deutsche Version des obigen Artikels von der Autorin übersetzt:
German version of the above, translated by the author:*

Einen Streit Spielerisch Erwidern

Ich bin alleinerziehende Mutter. Vor zwei Tagen habe ich mich entschieden, mich und meine Töchter in dreiwöchige Quarantäne zu stellen.

Gestern haben meine Töchter sich gestritten. Meine spielerische Antwort:

„(Schluchz) Ich habe niemanden, mit dem ich mich streiten kann!“ Sie haben gelacht und sich wieder verbunden gefühlt.

E—

Deutschland

Nachgedruckt aus der NC-
Besprechungsliste für Elternleiter*innen

Another Effect of Imperialism

For twenty-five years I have been thinking about, discharging on, and leading on being from the United States. I recently discovered a new-to-my-awareness but old pattern of imperialism and dominance. In recent reports from Africa on the RC lists a writer spoke about how a person visiting her country from Italy had brought the virus there, infecting many people. I realized something for the first time—that in my years of travel outside of the United States, especially to Asia, I was careful to get shots and medicines to prevent me from getting sick but never once thought about what disease I might have been bringing to those places and people.

I have also noticed that it has been challenging to convince many USers to stay home [during the coronavirus crisis]—not just so they will not get sick but also so they will not infect others. Even though I have followed that instruction, it was initially hard for me to understand that my action of staying home would not only help me stay healthy, it would also help me not to spread the virus to others.

I will keep discharging on never having thought—until now—about the possibility of infecting people who live outside of the United States when I travel.

I’m also aware that many Indigenous people died from diseases brought by Europeans to what is now the United States. Some of my European ancestors came to this continent in 1734.

Diane Lobaugh

Shoreline, Washington, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for USA political issues

The COVID Crisis, and Counseling People in New York City

I live in a borough of New York City (USA). New York City is currently the epicenter of COVID-19 in the United States, having seven percent of worldwide cases. The curve of infection is increasing at the time of this writing. This borough has the most confirmed cases in the city, and testing is just getting off the ground [just getting started]. The governor projects we will need 150,000 beds; we currently have only a third of that. The epidemic is projected to peak in about two weeks.

We immediately began having nightly discharge groups on Zoom and a discharge group for health-care workers. There will be groups for teachers and necessary workers.

We are giving people lots of room to show how scared they are. Initially, there was a lot of denial here as elsewhere in the United States. But as the virus has become more apparent, people have become increasingly frightened. The social distancing has restimulated folks' feelings of being on their own [by themselves]. We remind everyone that they can have a home base on Zoom calls.

It's been useful to talk about using good judgment—knowing if you have judgment, where you are vulnerable to losing it, and working on early distress related to it. It's important to contact trusted Co-Counselors and Reference People to check one's judgment because we are having to make what feel like, or actually are, life and death choices. I've noticed terrified people making poor choices and have spoken to them about the need to social distance and use good judgment.

Many people have partners and housemates who are not thinking well. I was surprised to find out how "off" [irrational] people's judgment has often been. It's important not to leave folks alone to think through this. I've observed that people's struggles here are nearly always rooted in early struggles. We need to communicate that we are not trying to supplant their thinking but that they must think about everything right now—their own safety, the safety of others, their family, and the medical establishment that will be overwhelmed. When we decide to risk exposure, as in the case of some workers, it needs to be done with intention and thinking.

It's helpful when people can access the early hurts connected with their decisions, with the material [distress] that might drive them in a particular direction. I counseled a man who works in a hospital; his distresses pull him to compulsively help people. From age two he was the sibling who held his physically abusive father accountable. This decision guided his whole life. He could cry hard about the decision and how bound to it he feels in his work.

I've noticed that some people become scared active and scared compulsive. Others are scared frozen and inhibited. Some are all of these. I've counseled people on where they

lose connection, get isolated, and fall into patterned thinking. "Where did you lose connection early on? Where did you have to give up on people? Where does that make you vulnerable now?"

Zoom and other online video communication can feel hard and restimulating to some people. Some experience feelings of hopelessness about connection when they can't "touch" another person. Some discharge well on longing to touch someone's hand while on Zoom.

For LGBTQ folks the pandemic has brought up memories and feelings about the AIDS epidemic and the terrible losses that happened at that time. We are also paying attention to the targeting and racism directed at Asians, the collapse of society, Trump's amplification of irrationality, and the escalation of oppression and violence. Working-class, immigrant, and undocumented folks are being hit hard by oppression here and elsewhere.

"Masayoshi"
New York, USA

Death and Dying, Life and Living, and COVID-19

I recently led a gather-in for a leaders' class in Queens, New York, USA. At the time, that part of New York City had the largest number of cases and deaths from COVID-19. Neighborhood hospitals were overrun, and poor people, immigrants, and people of color were especially hard hit with both the health and the economic impacts of the pandemic. My heart goes out to any of you who have lost loved ones, neighbors, friends, relatives, and members of your other communities.

In addition to counseling many people, I shared the following points that I have found useful to remember during these times, beyond staying close and keeping discharging:

- Now is a good time to remember what we love about life, to notice (positive and good) opportunities presented by this crisis, and to think about the good things we hope will result from it.
- It's good to be alive, to remember that we are alive, and to notice the preciousness of life—beyond the daily “stuff of life” that can preoccupy us. Being alive is completely different from not being alive.
- Capitalism devalues all life by prioritizing profits. Each oppression includes a devaluing of the lives of the people being targeted by the oppression. Every life has value, every life is equally precious. No one should ever have to choose who has a better shot at [a better chance for] life than someone else.
- We need to discharge enough to continue to stay smart about ourselves and others. Some of us have unhelpful patterned preoccupations with our own survival; others have patterned, unthinking pulls to self-sacrifice; and many people have both.
- *Let it be hard and keep looking.* As this drags on, we can become numb or hardened without realizing it. As Co-Counselors, we understand (theoretically) that this situation is restimulating our early hurts, but we don't always recognize that we're trying to function on top of feeling scared or sad or mad or isolated. Then we wonder why life has become more difficult. We need to work on the early hurts directly to make sustainable progress out of our distresses, but we can't jump over what things are like for us now. Pay attention to the larger picture, to what is going on for you—and in your sessions, let it be hard.

• I have found it helpful to keep crying until I can feel outraged—about the unnecessary deaths, about the playing out [acting out] of oppression at every turn, about the outrageous responses to the pandemic and more—not complaining but screaming with outrage, aiming beyond helplessness and despair.

• As a Jew, this entire situation holds many particular restimulations for me. I was born in the United States in 1950, and my early life was spent around Jews who were still restimulated from the mass death of the Holocaust. Also, this is the closest I have personally been to death on this scale. Many other groups also have histories that can lead to particular restimulations right now.

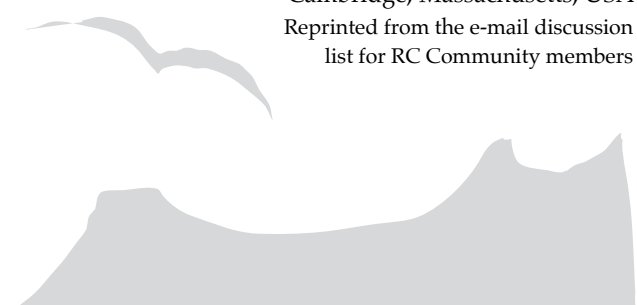
• Now is a good time to learn how to fight for our lives and to work on wanting to live, in case we are ever in a situation in which having done some of that might make the difference between living and dying. The middle of a personal health crisis is not the best time to start figuring these things out.

• Fear of death is completely different from death—fear of death is simply an old fear, a recording that can be discharged. We can face death. We can also choose our point of view and decide where we want to put our mind at any time. We can do this when we are dying, even if it takes effort. We can think about being loved and keep people close in our minds, even if our loved ones are not able to be with us.

• Always remember that discharge has a big positive impact on the ability of the body to stay healthy and to heal.

My article “Death and Dying, Life and Living” gives a good overview of RC insights into many related topics. It can be found at <https://www.rc.org/publication/present_time/pt137/pt137_011_jk>.

Joan Karp
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members



Keep Creating Our Vision of the World We Want

Dearest African-heritage Co-Counselors,

I greet you with love and in peace, praying our ancestors continue to preserve and protect us. I had the privilege to be on a BLCD (Black Liberation and Community Development) call led by our International Liberation Reference Person, Barbara Love, and I thought I would share the effect of her direction on my perspective.

The stay-at-home measure for COVID-19 has given me an opportunity to discharge fear and confusion. The BLCD call, which came a couple weeks after the measure, and doing some discharging, gave me a new perspective.

The perspective was that the effect of Ka'rona [COVID-19] gives us an opportunity to emerge new and fresh and fair and connected and just. We get to shape the world the way we want to, far away from the oppression that is now considered normal. We get to remember that dreaming this and doing this is not absurd.

Barbara cited the absurdity of a Walmart ad: A millionaire praises workers that he doesn't give benefits to for their heroism. Absurd for me is the U.S. reoccupation of a base in Trinidad for which it has a hundred-year lease (yeah, one hundred years). Why? To station itself as it prepares to fight Venezuelans for Venezuelan resources. Absurd. Vicious. Deadly.

Barbara's direction is to keep creating our vision of the world we want. I know I have to do this, and I need to, in order to remember my power, my zest, my connection and goodness. Thank you, Barbara, for the rational perspective and direction—to discharge whatever is necessary for us to recognise our vision and to decide, act, and discharge our way together to the other side, far away from "normal" and closer to light.

Chantal Esdelle

Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of African-heritage people



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

Appreciating *Present Time* and *RC Teacher Update 62*

Thank you for thoughtfully distilling language with such purpose, clarity, and simplicity. Every time I read PRESENT TIME, it helps me think about the ways I try to communicate ideas. “How would I see this idea presented in PRESENT TIME?”

I often work with people who speak English as a second language. I am also trying to communicate in a language that is not my mother tongue. Just asking myself that question is a useful bit of mental hygiene, as it prompts me to deliberately remove as much distress content as possible from the words that I use.

I was delighted to read the first article in the January PRESENT TIME, “Challenging Isolation,” from a talk by Tim Jackins at the Teachers’ and Leaders’ Workshop for Fryslân and the Netherlands. Discharging the early hurts that have led to isolation prompts me to go for the human connection before trying to communicate important ideas.

Larry Gardiner
Almelo, the Netherlands

Thanks for “keeping the presses rolling” in the midst of the pandemic. The articles and information PRESENT TIME provides for us all are timely and lifesaving!

Dale Everts
Durham, North Carolina, USA

I’m loving the April PRESENT TIME, especially all the writing about RC from outside of the United States.

Anonymous

The response of Co-Counselors to encouragement and editing help in writing for *Present Time* gave promise of an entirely new kind of people’s journalism. We saw the possibility that the very best thinking of large numbers of people could be elicited and communicated and improved in the areas of these people’s expertise, i.e., the detailed analysis and reporting of their own lives, their own re-emergences, their own thinking, their own oppressions, and their own struggles for liberation.

Harvey Jackins
From page 432 of “RC Literature: A Decisive Tool for Re-emergence, a Weapon for Liberation” in *The Benign Reality*



RC LITERATURE AT RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING COMMUNITY RESOURCES, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • LISA KAUFFMAN

I think the April 2020 issue is the best one ever! Such an amazing balance of important articles—long and short, inspiring and informative. I love how Harvey Jackins kept alive in each issue—it is a great example of how older writings are so currently relevant.

Anne Piche
Truxton, New York, USA

I just listened to Tim Jackins in *RC Teacher Update 62*, “Boldly Working Together in New Ways,” on my computer—without waiting for the mail to arrive, opening an envelope, or inserting a CD!

How wonderful to be able to access this important update so quickly and easily on the RC website. (And you can also find there a slow-speed version, for people whose first language is not English, and a written transcript!)

Many thanks to the technical crew who I am sure worked hard to make this possible.

Brian Lavendel
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

The Community RC Website

There is a website for the Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) Community at <www.rc.org>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about RC, including the following:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, a glossary, *The Art of Listening*, *The Human Side of Human Beings*, and the RC postulates)
- Introductory talks (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986) and Tim Jackins (2008)
- RC practice (*How to Begin RC*, including what to do in a session and how to lead support groups), counseling techniques and commitments, and a description of RC classes and the Community
- The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2017 edition, RC Goals, and forms
- Translations of articles into many languages, and language liberation information
- Articles from recent journals, including *Present Time*, and online publications
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Articles about teaching RC and outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in Spanish
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- Recent Draft Liberation Policy Statements and Climate Change Draft Programs
- Care of the Environment materials and information
- Resources for Human Liberation

Website for People New to RC

An RC website for people new to RC can be found at <www.reevaluationcounseling.org>. It contains introductory information about RC that is easy to access.



STEVE BANBURY

How to Contact Us Online

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers: litsales@rc.org, for orders and billing questions (or order on our website at <www.rationalisland.com>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

We now have websites for four ongoing projects that are taking the work of RC into the broader society. They have information geared to people who are not yet a part of RC.

United to End Racism (UER) works with other groups involved in eliminating racism and shares with them the theory and practice of RC. You can find valuable resources and a description of UER's projects at <www.unitedtoendracism.org>. (UER's e-mail address is uer@rc.org.)

No Limits for Women (No Limits) is an international organization of women (and men who are allies to women) dedicated to eliminating sexism and male domination throughout the world. Its website, <www.nolimitsforwomen.net>, features the No Limits Draft Liberation Policy Statement for Women and a video of a No Limits workshop, *Women and Men in Partnership to End Sexism*.

Sustaining All Life (SAL) has been attending conferences on the climate emergency, including the United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and presenting workshops, public forums, caucuses, support groups, fundamentals classes, and listening projects as part of bringing RC tools to climate change activists. Reports on its activities and more information about it are at <www.sustainingalllife.org>. (SAL's e-mail address is sal@rc.org.)

Jews and Allies United to End Anti-Semitism is a group of people, of all ages and from many countries, working together as Jews and non-Jews to end anti-Semitism. Key parts of the project are to model that there are allies committed to ending Anti-Semitism, to stop the use of anti-Semitism to divide progressive movements, and to join with others to make sure that anti-Semitism is included in the work on all oppression issues. Reports on the project's activities along with information from the pamphlet *Anti-Semitism: Why Is It Everyone's Concern?* are at <www.JewsandAllies.org>. (The e-mail address is Info@JewsAndAllies.org.)

Electronic Mailing Lists

The RC Community maintains a large number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. They are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for leaders only. You can see a list of these lists at <<https://list.rc.org>> and below.

Here are the steps to subscribe to a list:

1. Make sure you have a subscription to *Present Time* if you are a fluent reader of English. (If you are a fluent reader of English, part of being an active member of the RC Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) For the Community Members list and the United to End Racism list, you must have a recommendation from an Area or Regional Reference Person *unless you are an RC teacher*. For additional requirements, please see below.

2. Set up an account—if you don't already have one—at the server site <<https://list.rc.org>>. When you sign up for an account, you will receive an e-mail to verify your e-mail address. (If you don't see it for some time, be sure to look in your junk folder. If you can't find it anywhere, please contact the list admin at <hansen@rc.org>.) Once you verify your e-mail address, your account is created.

3. Go to the list website at <<https://list.rc.org>> and log in to your account. Then click on the list you would like to subscribe to and enter your e-mail address. You will get an e-mail from the list moderator asking for additional information, such as your full name, phone number, and mailing address. Send your answers back to the moderator, with a copy to ircc@rc.org. (It may take some days for the moderator to get back to you. Please be patient.)

When you have successfully subscribed, you will receive a confirmation e-mail. Keep this e-mail. You will need to use your account to make changes to your electronic mailing list subscriptions.

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RC Community Members: <community-members@list.rc.org>.

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism: <uer@list.rc.org>.

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@list.rc.org>.

Area Reference Persons: <arp@list.rc.org>.

International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons: <ilrp@list.rc.org>.

RC Teachers: <teachers@list.rc.org>.

Editors of RC or non-RC publications: <editors@list.rc.org>.

Translators of RC Literature: <translators@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **African Heritage People:** <black@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Artists:** <artists@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Atheists:** <atheists@list.rc.org>.

Leaders in the **Care of the Environment:** <environment@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Catholics:** <catholic@list.rc.org>.

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Leaders on **Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health:** <health-disability@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **East and Southeast Asian- and Pacific Islander-Heritage People:** <e-se-pac-asians@list.rc.org>.

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Leaders of **Elders:** <elders@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Family Work:** <family-work@list.rc.org>.

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Leaders of **Jews:** <jewish@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as:** <latinos-as@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Lawyers:** <lawyers@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Men:** <men@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **“Mental Health” Liberation:** <mhl@list.rc.org>.

Leaders of **Middle-Class People:** <middle-class@list.rc.org>.

Moderators of the RC e-mail lists: <moderators@list.rc.org>.

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Leaders of **Parents:** <parents@list.rc.org>.

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INFORMATION COORDINATORS

FOR RCers IN PARTICULAR TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS OR SHARING PARTICULAR INTERESTS OR BACKGROUNDS

Many large categories of RCers have an International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) or an International Commonality Reference Person (ICRP). These ILRPs and ICRPs are listed in *Present Time* (see page 117). Below is a listing of “Information Coordinators” of other particular groups of Co-Counselors. The “Information Coordinator” is an RCer who has agreed to keep an up-to-date list of RCers in her or his category, occasionally circulate an informal newsletter (compiled and distributed via e-mail—one copy to *Present Time* always, please), and help plan any special workshops, policy statements, or classes. The informal newsletter is circulated only to the people who make a written contribution to it.

If you belong in one of these categories that has an “Information Coordinator” already, please write to them, giving your full name, address, e-mail address, and phone number and sharing yourself and your ideas.

If you would like to be an “Information Coordinator,” please write to me and tell me why (and include your full name, address, e-mail address, and phone number). Feel free to suggest new categories. If you have someone else to suggest, I would like to hear that also.

Tim Jackins

TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS

**BIRTH WORKERS (MIDWIVES, DOCTORS, NURSES, DOULAS,
LACTATION CONSULTANTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, & OTHERS
WHO WORK WITH FAMILIES DURING THE MONTHS BE-
FORE & AFTER BIRTH AS WELL AS DURING THE BIRTHS):**
CATHERINE FISCHER
ANN ARBOR, MI USA
Tel. +1-734-395-5244 e-mail: catherinedfischer@gmail.com

CLERGYPERSONS:
BRIAN SMEATON
LETTERKENNY, COUNTY DONEGAL, IRELAND
Tel. +353-74-91 37917 e-mail: smeatonbrian@gmail.com

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS:
ELIZABETH SKIDMORE
ROXBURY, MA USA
Tel. +1-617-780-6792 e-mail: eskidmore2@aol.com

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS:
DAN CORLEY
PROVIDENCE, RI USA
Tel. +1-401-467-9709 e-mail: dcorley@communityprep.org

ELECTED OFFICIALS, CURRENT AND FORMER:
RUTH ATKIN
PACIFIC TIME ZONE, USA
Tel. +1-510-653-6003, +1-510-915-0167 e-mail: ratkin1@aol.com

FARMERS:
KATE POTTER
FULLERTON, CA USA
Tel. +1-309-338-7876 e-mail: potter_kate@hotmail.com

FUNDRAISERS:
ROEWEN WISHART
SILVERWATER, NSW AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61 449 659 769 e-mail: roewen.wishart@gmail.com

MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND EXECUTIVES:
MIKE MARKOVITS
STAMFORD, CT USA Tel. +1-203-536-5413
e-mail: mjmrkvts@aol.com, mjmarkovits@gmail.com

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS:
JAN FROEHLICH
FALMOUTH, ME USA
Tel. +1-207-781-5793 e-mail: jfroehlich1@me.com

PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS:
JEFFREY HINKLEY
YORKTOWN, VA USA
Tel. +1-757-867-7909 e-mail: polymers1@aol.com

PHYSICIANS:
STEVE BROMER
OAKLAND, CA USA
Tel. +1-415-309-8912 e-mail: sbromer@mac.com

BACKGROUNDS AND AVOCATIONS

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS:
WENDE WOOD
SEATTLE, WA USA
Tel. +1-206-783-7253 e-mail: wendej.wood@gmail.com

ASIAN-HERITAGE PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA:
RIE SHIRAISHI
ANNANDALE, NSW AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61-2-9692-9628 e-mail: deanrie@ozemail.com.au

**BLACK “MENTAL HEALTH” LIBERATION ACTIVISTS
IN ENGLAND:**
JENNY MARTIN
BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND
Tel. +44 121 240 0998 e-mail: families52@hotmail.com

BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE:
DAN SIMPSON
LANSDOWNE, PA USA
Tel. +1-610-622-3212, +1-267-767-3689 (cell)
e-mail: dansimpson@comcast.net

BUILDERS OF RURAL/SMALL-TOWN RC:
MARGO HITTLEMAN
GROTON, NY USA
Tel. +1-607-533-7501 e-mail: mjh17@cornell.edu

CAJUNS:
ELAINE CLEMENT
SAINT MARTINVILLE, LA USA
Tel. +1-337-257-1592 e-mail: cadienne@gmail.com

CORNISH LIBERATION:
CLIVE MARTIN
CALSTOCK, CORNWALL
Tel. +44-1822 833680 e-mail: gurumayi.om@virgin.net

DIVORCED PEOPLE:

MARILYN ROBB
ST AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Tel. +1-868-735-6377, +1-301-202-9960
e-mail: joyfulplace@yahoo.com

ESPERANTO SPEAKERS:

GEORGE PARTLOW
DOUGLAS, AK AND YUMA, AZ USA
Tel. +1-907-364-3309, +1-928-581-8146
e-mail: pricerbumanto@hotmail.com

GENTILE ALLIES OF JEWS:

DORANN VAN HEESWIJK
LONDON, ENGLAND
Tel. +44-207-622-6493 e-mail: vhdorann@gmail.com

GRANDPARENTS:

RANDI FREUNDLICH
SOMERVILLE, MA USA
Tel. +1-617-628-4208 e-mail: randifreundlich@gmail.com

HEALTH AND WELL BEING:

PAM GEYER
BELLAIRE, TX USA
Tel. +1-713-666-7300 e-mail: pgeyer@medcetera.com

IMMIGRANTS OF THE GLOBAL MAJORITY:

CHENG IMM TAN
PENANG, MALAYSIA
Tel. +60-1-64214092 e-mail: cit2288@gmail.com

INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND RC:

ALLAN HANSEN
CYPRESS, CA USA
Tel. +1-714-875-8870 e-mail: hansen@rc.org

INTERSEX PEOPLE AND PARENTS OF INTERSEX CHILDREN:

“PRSANK”
e-mail: prsank@mail.com

IRISH-HERITAGE US'ERS:

RITA DAVERN
SAINT PAUL, MN USA
Tel. +1-651-698-8498 e-mail: ritadavern@yahoo.com

MAORI:

HEMAIMA CARKEEK WIREMU
OTAKI, AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND
Tel. +64-6-364-6512, +64-21 100 4120
e-mail: hewiremu@gmail.com

“MENTAL HEALTH” LIBERATION IN AUSTRALIA:

CATHY PICONE
HOVE, SA AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61-8-8296-4357 e-mail: cpicone@westnet.com.au

MIDDLE-CLASS JEWS:

AMY LEOS-URBEL
NORTHAMPTON, MA USA
Tel. +1-413-584-2515 e-mail: aleos-urbel@comcast.net

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, PEOPLE WITH:

KEITH GLASSMAN
COSTA MESA, CA USA
Tel. +1-714-444-2618 e-mail: kgrc2012@gmail.com

ORPHANAGE SURVIVORS:

LEAH BLACKBURN
PORTLAND, OR USA
Tel. +1-503-320-9563 e-mail: lvblack@comcast.net

PEOPLE COUNSELING ON MALE CIRCUMCISION:

RAMI BEN-MOSHE
KFAR-SABA, ISRAEL
Tel. +972-9-7651-343 e-mail: ram_benm@netvision.net.il

PEOPLE RAISED MILITARY:

KATHLEEN HAMILTON
AUSTIN, TX USA
Tel. +1-512-659-4447 e-mail: zenhamk@aol.com

RAISED RURAL RCERS:

BETH BANNISTER
ITHACA, NY USA
Tel. +1-607-227-9532 e-mail: beth.bannister@yahoo.com

RC LITERATURE ENTHUSIASTS:

NICOLE LEIFER
JERUSALEM, ISRAEL
Tel. +972-2582-0252 e-mail: nicoleleifer@gmail.com

RCERS LIVING OUTSIDE THEIR ORIGINAL CULTURES:

MAURA FALLON
SEATTLE, WA USA
Tel. +1-206-257-5984 e-mail: mauraifallon@falloninternational.net

TURKISH-HERITAGE PEOPLE:

SAIME GOKSU TIMMS
BRIGHTON, SUSSEX ENGLAND
Tel. +44-127-368-5629 e-mail: saimegoksu@gmail.com

VETERANS:

VINCE DIJANICH
OAKLAND, CA USA
Tel. +1-916-606-3396 e-mail: vince.dijanich.rc@gmail.com

WHITE DESCENDANTS OF ENSLAVERS:

ELLEN DEACON
PHILADELPHIA, PA USA
Tel. +1-215-247-0670 e-mail: ellen.deacon@gmail.com

WHITE PEOPLE WORKING TO ELIMINATE RACISM:

JENNIFER WEXLER
CANTON, MA USA
Tel. +1-617-910-7848 e-mail: jenwexshayndle@gmail.com

WOMEN WHO HAVE OR HAVE HAD BREAST CANCER:

AMY KALISHER
CHAPLIN, CT USA
Tel. +1-401-359-2231 e-mail: amy@amykstudio.com

INFORMATION COORDINATORS FOR PARENTS

GAY, LESBIAN, AND BISEXUAL PARENTS:

“LAURA SECORD”
e-mail: laurasecord2@yahoo.ca

PARENTS OF CHILDREN LABELLED AS AUTISTIC:

ANNEKE GROOT
DEVENTER, OV THE NETHERLANDS
Tel. +31-570-769170 e-mail: anneke@amao.nl



CAROL FONTEIN

RATIONAL ISLAND PUBLISHERS



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The Translation Coordinators for each language are listed on the RC website at <www.rc.org> and on page 102 of this *Present Time*.

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(If none is noted, Harvey Jackins is the author.)

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Charles Obwona
Gulu, Uganda
+256-782742361
alfredoryem@gmail.com

Amharic:

Mesfin Taye Woldegiorgis
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
+251-91 099 2565
mtayewg@gmail.com

Arabic:

Iman Awadh
London, England
+44 7951-500-609
iawadh@gmail.com

Basque:

Juan Gabriel Urriategi
Antzuola, Gipuzkoa,
Basque Country
(between France & Spain)
+34-943-766020
j.g.urrio@gmail.com

Chinese:

Chen Pingjun
Beijing, P.R. China
+86-10-84648277
chenpj@hotmail.com

Danish:

Susanne Langer
København NV, Denmark
+45-24647311
susanne@susannelanger.dk

Dutch:

Marijke Wilmans
Groningen, The Netherlands
+31-50-312-2338
marijkewilmans@hetnet.nl

Farsi:

Vida Mozafarieh
Tehran, Iran
+98-21-22604145
vida5978@yahoo.com

Filipino:

Melanie Catalan Jimenez
+971-562598809,
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melanie010700@gmail.com

Finnish:

Kaisli Syrjänen
Finland
+358-400-711206
kaisli@hotmail.com

French:

Régis Courtin
Villiers St. Frederic, France
+33-155198386
regis.courtin@obspm.fr

Fries:

Adalgard Willemsma
Bitgum, Fryslan,
The Netherlands
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adalgard.willemsma@
gmail.com

Galician:

Maria Isabel Flores Seijas
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ifdm61@gmail.com

German:

Matthias Wentzlaff-Eggebert
Mainz, Germany
+49 6131 86456,
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Greek:

Vivi Katou
Athens, Greece
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Hausa:

Chioma Okonkwo
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Hungarian:

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Italian:

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nzanesi@gmail.com

Japanese:

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Itoigawa-shi,
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Kiswahili:

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rc@sedsmmc.org

Lithuanian:

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Vilnius, Lithuania
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zatara24@hotmail.com

Norwegian:

Anne Helgedagsrud
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Polish:

Yvonne Odrowaz-Pieniazek
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Romanian:

Ileana Vajda
Timisoara, Romania
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Russian:

Skvortsova Anna
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Spanish:

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USA
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Swedish:

Teresa Wessman
Stockholm, Sweden
+46 76-327 0849
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Tamil:

Mahendiran Periyasamy
Herndon, Virginia, USA
+1-502-386-1673
mahendiranp@gmail.com

Yoruba:

Chioma Okonkwo
Lagos, Nigeria
+234-8023-108-536
chioks4@yahoo.com

Rational Island Publishers

Translation Coordinator:

Truus Jansen
c/o Re-evaluation Counseling
Community Resources,
719 2nd Ave. North,
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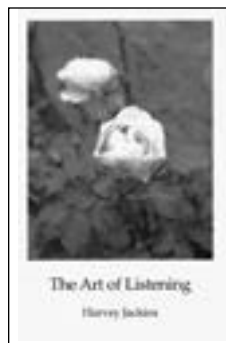
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- Deciding to Challenge Our Earliest Hurts
RCTU 23 (CD 22)
- Some Thoughts About Men
RCTU 24 (CD 23)
- Engaging Our Minds
RCTU 25 (CD 24)



2011 set

- Standing Against the Effects of Distress
RCTU 26 (CD 25)
- A Crucial Accomplishment in Ending Racism—a Talk to White People
RCTU 27 (CD 26)
- Further Steps in Family Work
RCTU 28 (CD 27)
- Finishing an Unfinished Battle
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2012 set

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RCTU 30 (CD 30)
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RCTU 31 (CD 31)
- Three Topics from Open Questions
RCTU 32 (CD 32)
- Sex and Relationships
RCTU 33 (CD 33)

2013 set

- Changing Your Mind
RCTU 34 (CD 34)
- Where We Are
RCTU 35 (CD 35)
- Building RC
RCTU 36 (CD 36)
- Further Thoughts on Relationships
RCTU 37 (CD 37)

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RCTU 38 (CD 38)
- You Can't Lose Now
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- Developing Forever as Leaders
RCTU 40 (CD 40)
- Toward a Society Without Class
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continued . . .

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RCTU 42 (CD 42)
- **Challenging Our Limitations**
RCTU 43 (CD 43)
- **An Interesting Time to Be Alive**
RCTU 44 (CD 44)
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RCTU 46 (CD 46)
- **Preparing to Move**
RCTU 47 (CD 47)
- **The Beginnings of RC**
RCTU 48 (CD 48)
- **Racism, Genocide, and the RC Communities**
RCTU 49 (CD 49)

2017 set

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RCTU 50 (CD 50)
- **Near the Edge of Happiness**
RCTU 51 (CD 51)
- **Looking at Class**
RCTU 52 (CD 52)
- **Life Guided by Thought and Decision**
RCTU 53 (CD 53)

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- **Let Go and Jump**
RCTU 54 (CD 54)
- **Together in Disagreement: Guidance Toward Consensus at the 2017 World Conference**
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- **Pushing for Change**
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- **Using Connection to Grow Our Communities**
RCTU 57 (CD 57)

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RCTU 58 (CD 58)
- **Challenging the Material That Keeps Us Separate**
RCTU 59 (CD 59)
- **Facing the Climate Emergency**
RCTU 60 (CD 60) (2 CD set)

2020

- **Our Work to Keep Thinking in the Face of Attacks**
RCTU 61 (CD 61)
- **Boldly Working Together in New Ways**
RCTU 62 (CD 62)
The above CD is also available digitally. Subscribers will be e-mailed the link and the password. Non-subscribers can order the digital version for the same price as the CD.
- **Continuing to Build "Mental Health" Liberation Work**
RCTU 63 (CD 63)

The four CDs per year are available on a subscription basis, one calendar year at a time, for up to three years. They are mailed out quarterly as they are released. The price is \$25 per year for certified RC teachers (\$27.50 for Washington, USA, residents) and \$35 per year for all others (\$38.50 for Washington, USA, residents).

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A talk by Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People (2011)

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A talk by Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People (2010)

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Communications à l'atelier Ottawa 2011
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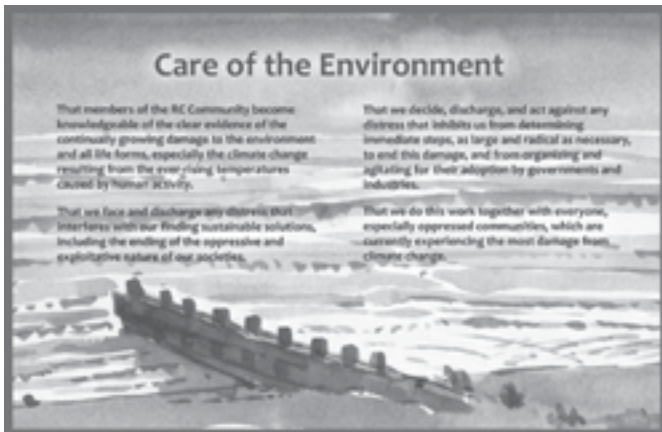
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Jewish Liberation	DVD 14
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REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra

INGRID MCKENZIE
LYNEHAM, ACT
Tel. +61-2-6249-6684
e-mail: ingridmckenzie@ozemail.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South & East of Adelaide

ANNE THOMPSON
ADELAIDE, SA
Tel. +61-408-806-573
e-mail: annephillynne@gmail.com

North & West of Adelaide

CYNTHIA LAWSON
WEST CROYDON, SA
Tel. +61-423-775-527
e-mail: cynthia.lawson@adam.com.au

VICTORIA

Melbourne

LOUISA FLANDER
MELBOURNE, VIC
Tel. +61-407-831-676
e-mail: louisa@netspace.net.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth Coastal

BARBARA FREEMAN
PERTH, WA
Tel. +61-8-9337-8818
e-mail: barbfree53@gmail.com

Perth Eastern

DEE PARRY
PERTH, WA
Tel. +61-8-9274-3129

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JOSEBA INAKI MATA HOZ
ANTZUOLA, GIPUZKOA
Tel. +34 943 766567
e-mail: i-mata-hoz@outlook.com

CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA

North Shore/Bowen Island

MARY KLAUSEN
NORTH VANCOUVER, BC
Tel. +1-604-255-9884
e-mail: mary.klausen@gmail.com

Vancouver

ELAINE SHEARER
VANCOUVER, BC
Tel. +1-604-653-1115
e-mail: elaine.shearer@me.com

Okanagan/Shuswap

MARTHA WICKETT
SALMON ARM, BC
Tel. +1-250-463-5315
e-mail: mfw@shaw.ca

MANITOBA

Winnipeg

DARLENE DANIELS
WINNIPEG, MB
Tel. +1-204-783-7723
e-mail: ddaniels76@hotmail.com

ONTARIO

Toronto East

DONNA PARIS
TORONTO, ON
Tel. +1-416-322-4981
e-mail: donnamparis@gmail.com

Toronto West

JENNIFER FERRARI
TORONTO, ON
Tel. +1-416-433-3370
e-mail: genstar10@hotmail.com

CHINESE MAINLAND

BEIJING MUNICIPALITY

Beijing

MA LIHONG
BEIJING
Tel. +86-130-5115-2890
e-mail: rcmalihong@163.com

CONGO,

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF

DR Congo

WILLY TUKUYI LUKANGA
LUBUMBASHI
Tel. +243 972373193
e-mail: lukangawilli2016@gmail.com

DENMARK

København

TRINE MARIBO
CARSTENSEN
KØBENHAVN N
Tel. +45-35-35-79-86
e-mail: trinem@msn.com

ENGLAND

NORTH EAST

Northumbria

RALPH DOMINIC
PETTINGILL
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Tel. +44-79 0515 8658
e-mail: ralphpettingill@gmail.com

NORTH WEST

Manchester & Neighbours

SUE COOPER
HIGH PEAK, DERBYSHIRE
Tel. +44 16 6374 6621
e-mail: suecoopernewmills@hotmail.com

Merseyside

LINDA BOYNE
LIVERPOOL, MERSEYSIDE
Tel. +44 151 722 2937
e-mail: linda_boyne@hotmail.com

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

North Yorkshire

(Acting ARP)
ADAM MYERS
YORK
Tel. +44-1904 636055
e-mail: adammyers31@hotmail.com

Leeds

TERRY SIMPSON
LEEDS, YORKSHIRE
Tel. +44-113-2469798
e-mail: tezbeulah@phoncoop.coop

EAST MIDLANDS

Nottingham

ANICA GAVRILOVIC
NOTTINGHAM
Tel. +44-115-922-4389
e-mail: anica.gavrilovic@ntlworld.com

Leicester

CEE MARTIN
LEICESTER
Tel. +44-11-6259-3563
e-mail: ceemartin@aol.com

LONDON

Islington to Barnet

(London)
OLIVIA VINCENTI
LONDON
Tel. +44 20 8883 9230
e-mail: olivia.vincenti@btinternet.com

Camden & Holloway

(London)
TRICIA CLARKE
LONDON
Tel. +44 78 0390 9058
e-mail: tricia.clarke@btinternet.com

Northwest London

ELIZABETH MARTINDALE
LONDON
Tel. +44-20-8960-5393
e-mail: ms.elizabeth.martindale@gmail.com

West London

BARBARA HARWOOD
LONDON
Tel. +44 78 9038 6854
e-mail: barbaraharwood1944@gmail.com

Southwark & South

Lewisham (London)
GALE BURNS
LONDON
Tel. +44-18-291-4108
e-mail: josgale@jgdburns.org.uk

SOUTH EAST

Oxford City

ROMILLY GREGORY
OXFORD
Tel. +44-18 6551 0037
e-mail: romilly.gregory@btopenworld.com

Bucks

(Acting ARP)
CHRISTINE DIAMANDOPOULOS
MILTON KEYNES
Tel. +44-14 9486 8299
e-mail: sparklingmind@hotmail.com

SOUTH WEST

Bristol

BILLY FORSYTHE
SOUTHVILLE, BRISTOL
Tel. +44-11-79393517
e-mail: wjforsythe@hotmail.com

Wessex

PAMELA JEFFERIES
POOLE, DORSET
Tel. +44-12 0260 1395
e-mail: pamela.jefferies@googlemail.com

ESWATINI, THE KINGDOM OF

(formerly Swaziland)

Madonsa Township

BAFANA MATSEBULA
MBABANE
Tel. +268-7-602-5295 (c)
+268-2347-2029 (h)
e-mail: mngani7@gmail.com

Manzini Central

NTOMBENKULU MARITHA
MHLANGA
MBABANE
Tel. +268-7-612-6442 (c)
+268-505-2172
e-mail: ntekati@gmail.com

ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa

MESFIN TAYE
WOLDEGIORGIS
ADDIS ABABA
Tel. +251-91 099 2565
e-mail: mtayewg@gmail.com

FINLAND

Helsinki

ELINA MALKAMAKI
HELSINKI
Tel. +358-407-549-491
e-mail: hannaelinamalkamaki@gmail.com

GHANA

Accra

BAMANA-YANGOU
(URBAIN BAMANA)
ACCRA
Tel. +233-244-381-060
e-mail: urbainbamana@yahoo.com

Laterbiokorshie-Accra

YVONNE NAA DEDEI
AMMAH
ACCRA-NORTH
Tel. +233-243-156880
e-mail: royalnaa@yahoo.com

GREECE

Athens

MARGIE DOYLE
PAPADOPOULOU
KANTZA
Tel. +30-210-665-8985
e-mail: margiedp@otenet.gr

INDIA

MAHARASHTRA

Mumbai

HOMI BILIMORIA
MUMBAI
Tel. +91-22-2517-2581
e-mail: hominbilimoria@gmail.com

Pune

SUJATA RAJARSHI
PUNE
MAHARASHTRA
Tel. +91-20-65224887
e-mail: sujata_rajarshi@hotmail.com

IRELAND

Dublin

CAROLINE CONROY
KEELEY
DUBLIN
Tel. +353-86-811 7553
e-mail: cconroylatouche@training@gmail.com

ISRAEL

Jerusalem

NAOMI RAZ
JERUSALEM
Tel. +972-2-6439696
e-mail: naomi@razei-habriut.com

Ha Sharon

NAOMI BARELI
HOD HASHOARON
Tel. +972-9-742-7073
e-mail: barelin55@gmail.com

Misgav-Maalot

(Acting ARP)
MERCHI SHUKRUN-LIOR
TUVAL
Tel. +972-4-9907995
e-mail: merchisl@walla.co.il

Tel Aviv

ISHAI SHLAIN
TEL AVIV
Tel. +972-3-516-7389,
+972-54-8165354
e-mail: ishai.shlain@gmail.com



REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

JAPAN HOKKAIDO

Hokkaido East Side
KYONJA HWANG
SAPPORO-CITY
HOKKAIDO
Tel. +81-70-5012-2453
e-mail: green810kyon@
yahoo.co.jp

Hokkaido West Side
KAZUKO MATSUHASHI
SAPPORO-CITY
HOKKAIDO
Tel. +81-11-695-2477
e-mail: kazuko1524@
yahoo.co.jp

HONSHU

Tohoku
HIROSHI (HIROPY) SATO
YAMAGATA-CITY
YAMAGATA-PREF
Tel. +81-50-2012-7534
e-mail: hiro_peacefull@
yahoo.co.jp

Kitakanto (North Side
Tokyo)

MAKO HIRAHARA
TOKYO
Tel. +81-80-5441-7584
e-mail: ameame634@
yahoo.co.jp

Kanto Tamatama (South
Side Tokyo)

ULALA SAKAIYA
KUNITACHI-SHI, TOKYO
Tel. +81-70-5603-8738

Kanagawa & Machida

JUNKO HASHIMOTO
KAWASAKI-SHI
Tel. +81-44-945-8108
e-mail: shuji010_0911@
yahoo.co.jp

Kansai

YOKO (HIRO) HOSHIBA
OSAKA
Tel. +81-6-6180-4484
e-mail: hirohigashiosaka@
yahoo.co.jp

KYUSHU

Kyushu
SUNAMI-CHAN YUKO
TAKANAWA
OGORI CITY, FUKUOKA
Tel. +81-90-5746-0877
e-mail: btdyk933@yahoo.co.jp

KENYA

Nairobi
JANET WAMBUI KABUE
THIKA
Tel. +254-722-842-095
e-mail: janet2ke@yahoo.com

MEXICO

DISTRITO FEDERAL

Mexico City I
ILIRIA HERNANDEZ
UNZUETA
DISTRITO FEDERAL
Tel. +52-55-5850-6092
e-mail: i_unzueta@
hotmail.com

THE NETHERLANDS

Groningen
MARIJKE WILMANS
GRONINGEN
Tel. +31-50-312-2338
e-mail: marijkewilms@
hetnet.nl

Amsterdam
CAROLIEN OSTERMANN
DIEMEN
Tel. +31-627492235
e-mail: carolien.ostermann@
gmail.com

Utrecht
FRANK VAN DEN HEUVEL
NIEUWEGEIN
Tel. +31-30-602-2441
e-mail: frank@heuveltop.nl

Zuid-Nederland
ERNA RAIJMAKERS
VUGHT, NOORD BRABANT
Tel. +31 6 525 60 600,
+31 411 78 50 38
e-mail: erna@raij.nl

OVERIJSEL

Zwolle
WENDY WESSELINK-TEN
THIJE
ZWOLLE, OVERIJSEL
Tel. +31 38 4525393
e-mail: wendy.wesselink@
zonnet.nl

NIGERIA

ABIA

Umuahia-Abia
PAMELA EZINWA UKAKU
UMUAHIA, ABIA-STATE
Tel. +234-8033063814
e-mail: pamukaku@
yahoo.com

ANAMBRA

Onitsha
JOY OGECHUKWU
IKEBAKU
IDEMILI NORTH LGA
ANAMBRA STATE
Tel. +234-8033703421
e-mail: joyikebaku@
yahoo.com

Unizik Awka
CHINEZE SOPHIA IBEKWE
AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE
Tel. +234-8080239789
e-mail: nezobiokoye@
gmail.com

Awka
NWANKWO CHINEDU
ODIDIKA
AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE
Tel. +234 8037670446
e-mail: eduodidika@
gmail.com

ENUGU

Enugu Main
KINGSLEY CHIMEDU
IBEKWE
NEW HAVEN, ENUGU
Tel. +234-803-781-9293
e-mail: kbekewe@
hotmail.com

GRA Enugu
MARSHALL IFEANYI
CHINAKA
ENUGU EAST LGA, ENUGU
Tel. +234-80343-59625
e-mail: ifeanymarshall@
yahoo.com

FEDERAL CAPITOL TERRITORY

Abuja
OGWU, UGO MERCY
ABUJA-FCT
Tel. +234 8033435373
e-mail: ugomerc@yahoo.com

LAGOS

Lagos
CHIOMA OKONKWO
LAGOS
Tel. +234-8023-108-536
e-mail: chioks4@yahoo.com

North Central Lagos
ONII NWANGWU-
STEVENSON
MASHA-SURULERE, LAGOS
Tel. +234-805-6009068
e-mail: oniinwangwu@
yahoo.com

Agor-Okota Lagos
OMODELE IBITOYE EJEH
AGOR OKOTA, LAGOS
Tel. +234-8020750826
e-mail: talk2modele@
yahoo.com

RIVERS

Port Harcourt
CHRIS AKUBUIRO
RUMUOGBA-PORT HAR-
COURT, RIVERS
Tel. +234-7066988252
e-mail: Chris1akubuiro@
gmail.com

PALESTINE

Palestinian Territories
NOHA HIJAB
KEAR MAKER
Tel. +972-52-8337311
e-mail: noha11968@gmail.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ufa
MARINA BASHIROVA
UFA
BASHKORTOSTAN
Tel. +7-987-4850880
e-mail: ga135@yandex.ru

St. Petersburg I
SKOVRONSKAYA LIDIA
ST. PETERSBURG
RUSSIA
Tel. +7-812-351-5781
e-mail: li-skovronskaya@
yandex.ru

St. Petersburg III
SKVORTSOVA ANNA
ST. PETERSBURG
Tel. +7-812-2737698
e-mail: anna.skvortsova@
icloud.com

Cherepovets
ALEXANDER VIKULOV
CHEREPOVETS
Tel. +7-8202-24-80-86

RWANDA

Kigali
JEAN CLAUDE (JUNIOR)
SHEMA
KIGALI
Tel. +250 781072868
e-mail: juniorshema@
yahoo.com

SWEDEN

Göteborg Väst
(Acting ARP)
HELEN JANSSON
GÖTEBORG
Tel. +46-739-314366
e-mail: helenjansson@
hotmail.se

Göteborg Centrum
CHRISTINA (TINA)
TENGBERG
GÖTEBORG
Tel. +46-737148640
e-mail: christina.tengberg@
gmail.com

Skåne
FREDRIK EKLÖF
MALMO
Tel. +46-708859171
e-mail: pamsamtal@
fredrikeklolf.se

Stockholm Nord (North)
BRITT ARBELIUS
SOLNA
Tel. +46 72-933 82 03
e-mail: barbelius@gmail.com

Stockholm Sydöäst (South-
west)
SUJATA MAINI
STOCKHOLM
Tel. +46-734-413-151
e-mail: Sujata.maini@
gmail.com

Parsamtal Stockholm
Sydöstra (Southeast)
JOSEFIN HASSELBERG
SKARPNÄCK
Tel. +46-70-725 91 70
e-mail: superdolphin@
hotmail.com

SWITZERLAND

AARGAU
Switzerland & Frieburg i.
Greisgau
GWEN POLLACK
ZOFINGEN / AG
Tel. +41-79-771-8078
e-mail: gwen_pollack@
yahoo.de

TAIWAN

HUALIEN
Hualien Taiwan
TSUL-LING WANG
HUALIEN CITY, HUALIEN
Tel. +886 912 132 751
e-mail: hanaling@gmail.com

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO (WEST INDIES)

Trinidad & Tobago
CHANTAL ESDELLE
PORT OF SPAIN
Tel. +1-868-620-4616
e-mail: chantal.esdelle@
gmail.com

UGANDA

Kampala
MR. APOLLO SSEMWOGER-
ERE VVUBYA
KAMPALA
Tel. +256-753-421-092
e-mail: vubix@yahoo.com

Gulu
(Acting ARP)
ATUNU NAUME MARRIAM
ODONGKARA
GULU
Tel. +256-773-290940
e-mail: naumeoak7@
gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM

*See Cornwall, England,
Scotland, and Wales*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ALASKA

Anchorage
PATTI SAUNDERS
ANCHORAGE, AK
Tel. +1-907-278-2802
e-mail: saunders.patti@
gmail.com

ARIZONA

Phoenix
JUNE-YVONNE MARTINEZ
COLERIDGE
PHOENIX, AZ
Tel. +1-602-861-8008
e-mail: jycoleridge@
gmail.com

ARKANSAS

Fayetteville
DOROTHY MARCY
FAYETTEVILLE, AR
Tel. +1-479-601-1321
e-mail: dmarcy1@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

Mendocino-Redwood Coast
WADE GRAY
FORT BRAGG, CA
Tel. +1-707-357-4369
e-mail: wahday@mcn.org

Sonoma County
EDDIE HASAN
GUERNEVILLE, CA
Tel. +1-707-978-0270
e-mail: eddiehasan09@
gmail.com

Marin County
JANET HUGHES
FOREST KNOLLS, CA
Tel. +1-415-488-9113
e-mail: janetughrc@
gmail.com

West & Northeast Berkeley
GAIL MANDELLA
BERKELEY, CA
Tel. +1-510-843-0139
e-mail: gmandella@
comcast.net

For more information contact:
Paula Buel
Tel. +1-510-847-7652
e-mail: paulabuel@gmail.com

East Bay North
SUE YOSHIWARA
ALBANY, CA
Tel. +1-510-684-8789
e-mail: sueoda617@gmail.com

East Oakland
MICAELA MORSE
OAKLAND, CA
Tel. +1-917-518-4983
e-mail: micelamorse@
mindspring.com

Oakland
MARIA FRANCO
OAKLAND, CA
Tel. +1-510-384-8919
e-mail: rccorreo@earthlink.net

Greater Oakland
MORGEN ELIZABETH-
CHILD
OAKLAND, CA
Tel. +1-510-967-0565
e-mail: moonwolfmama@
aol.com

Alameda County (except
Berkeley & Albany)
RUTH HARTMAN
CASTRO VALLEY, CA
Tel. +1-510-543-6902
e-mail: ruth@wordcrtf.com
For more information contact:
Iris Goldman
Tel. +1-510-384-4617
e-mail: irisjoang@gmail.com

Sacramento Valley &
Foothills
GAYLE CRIBB
DIXON, CA
Tel. +1-707-678-2601
e-mail: gcribb@cal.net

San Francisco 1
BRIAN FOX
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Tel. +1-415-370-6266
e-mail: bfoxae@gmail.com

San Francisco 2
AMPARO VIGIL
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Tel. +1-415-637-1536
e-mail: avigil101@gmail.com

Mid-Peninsula
JUDY SEREBRIN
REDWOOD CITY, CA
Tel. +1-415-215-2066
e-mail: serebrin@sbcbglobal.net

Peninsula South
SHARON VEACH
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA
Tel. +1-650-968-4354
e-mail: srveach.rc@gmail.com

San Jose
LEYLA MODIRZADEH
SAN JOSE, CA
Tel. +1-718-768-3412
e-mail: leylamod1@gmail.com

Santa Cruz
MICHAEL LEVY
SANTA CRUZ, CA
Tel. +1-831-427-9916
e-mail: levysantacruz@
gmail.com

For more information contact:
Roland Saher
Tel. +1-831-295-6106
e-mail: rolandsahe@
gmail.com

Orange County/Long Beach
ALLAN HANSEN
CYPRESS, CA
Tel. +1-714-875-8870
e-mail: hansen@rc.org

REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

Portland South
JEANETTE ARMENTANO
PORTLAND, OR
Tel. +1-503-577-3328
e-mail: j.armentano@icloud.com

For more information contact:
Mary Daniels
Tel. +1-503-839-3304
e-mail: groundbear@gmail.com

North Eugene & Outlying Areas
CAMERON HUBBE
EUGENE, OR
Tel. +1-541-913-7271
e-mail: human@nu-world.com

South Eugene/Springfield
LOIS YOSHISHIGE
EUGENE, OR
Tel. +1-541-343-7795
e-mail: lkyoshishige@comcast.net

PENNSYLVANIA

Chester County
ELINOR THOMFORDE
KENNETT SQUARE, PA
Tel. +1-610-388-2064
e-mail: ebthomforde@aol.com



Spruce
(Acting ARP)
MARCY MORGAN
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-724-1571
e-mail: marcymorgan48@gmail.com

Philadelphia Northwest
(Germantown, Mount Airy, Main Line, & Montgomery County)
BILLY YALOWITZ
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-432-6366
e-mail: byalowitz@gmail.com

Wissahickon
(Germantown, Mount Airy, Main Line)
HAO-LI TAI LOH
MERION STATION, PA
Tel. +1-610-667-4561
e-mail: tai_loh@msn.com

Schuylkill I
PAMELA HAINES
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-349-9428
e-mail: pamelahaines1@gmail.com

Broad Street
ERIC BRAXTON
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-267-278-2772
e-mail: ebrax12@gmail.com

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island
BETSY BEACH
PROVIDENCE, RI
Tel. +1-401-467-9709
e-mail: betsybeach@verizon.net

TEXAS

Dallas Sherman
KAREN CARRIER
MABANK, TX
Tel. +1-469-261-8580
e-mail: kmcarrier@sbcglobal.net

North, Central, & East Austin
SELWYN POLIT
AUSTIN, TX
Tel. +1-512-696-0410
e-mail: selwynpolit@gmail.com

South Austin
BEVERLY BAJEMA
AUSTIN, TX
Tel. +1-512-809-0730
e-mail: bev@bajema.me

West Houston
BOB ROMERO
HOUSTON, TX
Tel. +1-713-995-8392
e-mail: bobromero@gmail.com

East Houston
JENNIFER KELLOUGH
HOLMES
MISSOURI CITY, TX
Tel. +1-281-437-0622
e-mail: jennifer_m27@hotmail.com

VIRGINIA

Northern Virginia
DREAMA FRISK
ARLINGTON, VA
Tel. +1-703-524-1459
e-mail: dreamawf@gmail.com

Charlottesville
KAREN BYRD
AFTON, VA
Tel. +1-434-361-1359
e-mail: kbyrdva@gmail.com

WASHINGTON

Bellingham
ALBERT FIELDS
BELLINGHAM, WA
Tel. +1-360-734-9056
e-mail: albertfields@mac.com

North Seattle/Northwest King County
SANDRA MCDONALD
EDMONDS, WA
Tel. +1-425-772-2417
e-mail: mcdonaldmgregor@hotmail.com

Meridian (Seattle)
DEBBIE BELL
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-498-7403
e-mail: deborahbell@comcast.net

Madison (Seattle)
STEVE THOMPSON
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-799-7288
e-mail: stevedt@comcast.net

Duwamish (West Seattle)
YUKO HIBINO
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-947-6313
e-mail: hibiyuko@gmail.com
For more information contact:
Lisa Kauffman
Tel. +1-206-501-6542
e-mail: lisaprws@gmail.com

Rainier (Seattle)
KAREN LASOTA
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-818-6801
e-mail: lasotak@hotmail.com

Olympia
JAN YOSHIWARA
OLYMPIA, WA
Tel. +1-360-951-5852
e-mail: jyoshiwara@gmail.com

WASHINGTON, D.C. (DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA)

Washington, D.C. 1
JEVERA TEMSKY
WASHINGTON, DC
e-mail: jrtemsky@gmail.com

Washington, D.C. 2
(Acting ARP)
KAREN SLANEY
SILVER SPRING, MD
Tel. +1-240-468-3737
e-mail: kswa@earthlink.net

WISCONSIN

Madison
HOLLY JORGENSON
MADISON, WI
Tel. +1-608-233-5699
e-mail: hollydjorgenson@gmail.com

Milwaukee
MARTHA BARRY
MILWAUKEE, WI
Tel. +1-414-350-4761
e-mail: barrymle@aol.com

WALES

De Cymru/Cardiff
PAT GREGORY
CARDIFF
Tel. +44-2920 226990
e-mail: patj.gregory@gmail.com



INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE PERSONS AND THE RE-EVALUATION FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE PERSONS, INTERNATIONAL LIBERATION REFERENCE PERSONS, INTERNATIONAL COMMONALITY REFERENCE PERSONS, AND THE RE-EVALUATION FOUNDATION

International Reference Persons

International Reference

Person:
TIM JACKINS
C/O RE-EVALUATION
COUNSELING COMMUNITY RESOURCES
719 SECOND AVE. NORTH
SEATTLE, WA 98109
USA
Tel. +1-206-284-0311
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

Alternate International Reference Person:

DIANE SHISK
C/O RE-EVALUATION
COUNSELING COMMUNITY RESOURCES
719 SECOND AVE. NORTH
SEATTLE, WA 98109
USA
Tel. +1-206-284-0311
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

International Liberation Reference Persons

For African-Heritage

People:
BARBARA LOVE
AMHERST, MA
USA
Tel. +1-413-253-3814
e-mail: bjlove.rc@gmail.com

For Allies to Young People:

JENNY SAZAMA
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-308-5384
e-mail: jenny.yob@gmail.com

For Catholics:

JOANNE BRAY
STAMFORD, CT
USA
Tel. +1-203-273-3058
e-mail: jmbray@aol.com

For Chicanos/as:

LORENZO GARCIA
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
USA
Tel. +1-505-831-4757,
+1-505-228-3063 (cell)
e-mail: garcialore51@gmail.com

For Chinese-Heritage

People:
FRANCIE CHEW
SOMERVILLE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-628-4998 (home),
+1-617-293-4058 (cell)
e-mail: franciechew@gmail.com

For College & University

Faculty:
ELLIE BROWN
WILMINGTON, DE
USA
Tel. +1-302-983-2902
e-mail: ebrown@wcupa.edu

For Elders:

PAM GEYER
BELLAIRE, TX
USA
Tel. +1-713-666-7300
e-mail: pgeyer@medcetera.com

For Japanese-Heritage

People:
JAN YOSHIWARA
OLYMPIA, WA
USA
Tel. +1-360-951-5852
e-mail: jyoshiwara@gmail.com

For Jews:

CHERIE BROWN
SILVER SPRING, MD
USA
Tel. +1-240-638-2813
e-mail: ncbiinc@aol.com

For Lawyers:

MARSHA HUNTER
CAMBRIDGE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-803-3449
e-mail: m-hunter@comcast.net

For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, & Transgender

People:
"JEANNE D'ARC" (J—)
SEATTLE, WA
USA
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

Asst. Liberation Reference

Person for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, & Transgender People:
"DAVID NIJINSKY" (D—)
USA
e-mail: dnijinsky@gmail.com

For "Mental Health"

Workers:
JEAN HAMILTON
PALO ALTO, CA
USA
Tel. +1-650-493-6668,
+1-650-387-3837
e-mail: rjjean1@gmail.com

For Middle-Class People:

SEÁN RUTH
ARDSBEG, GORTAHORK
LETTERKENNY
COUNTY DONEGAL
IRELAND
Tel. +353-87-2350362
e-mail: seangruth@gmail.com

For Musicians:

HEATHER HAY
VANCOUVER, BC
CANADA
Tel. +1-604-876-7148,
+1-604-340-6027 (cell)
e-mail: hlhay3@gmail.com

For Native Americans:

MARCIE RENDON
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
USA
Tel. +1-612-237-8942
e-mail: MRendon70362@gmail.com



For Owning-Class People:

JO SAUNDERS
WINCHESTER
HANTS
ENGLAND
Tel. +44 1962 877465
e-mail: jo.saunders@btinternet.com

For Pacific Islander & Filipino/a-Heritage

People:
TERESA ENRICO
SEATTLE, WA
USA
Tel. +1-503-735-5419
e-mail: teresaenrico@gmail.com

For Parents:

MARYA AXNER
SOMERVILLE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-776-7411
e-mail: maryaaxner@gmail.com

For People with Disabilities:

MARSHA SAXTON
EL CERRITO, CA
USA
Tel. +1-510-234-2656
e-mail: marsax@wid.org

For Raised-Poor People:

GWEN BROWN
WILMINGTON, DE
USA
Tel. +1-302-656-2630
e-mail: gbbrown@udel.edu

For South, Central, & West

Asian-Heritage People:
AZADEH KHALILI
BROOKLYN, NY
USA
Tel. +1-917-645-2538
e-mail: azikhalili@gmail.com

For Union Activists:

JOANIE PARKER
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-522-4086
e-mail: Joanieparker7@gmail.com

For Visual Artists:

EMILY FEINSTEIN
BROOKLYN, NY
USA
Tel. +1-718-625-6696
e-mail: emsusanf@gmail.com

For Women:

DIANE BALSER
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-390-5660
e-mail: dibals@comcast.net

For Working-Class People:

DAN NICKERSON
FREEPORT, ME
USA
Tel. +1-207-865-3869
e-mail: dnickerson122@comcast.net



For Young Adults

(ages 21-30):
EMILY BLOCH
BROOKLINE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-763-8085 (cell)
e-mail: bloch.emily@gmail.com

For Young People

(21 and under):
ELVIN LANDAEUS
CSIZMADIA
HOOR (near Malmö)
SWEDEN
Tel. +46-737473444
e-mail: elvin@landaeus.com

International Commonality Reference Persons

For the Care of the Environment:

DIANE SHISK
SEATTLE, WA
USA
Tel. +1-206-284-0311
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

For Educational Change (Classroom Teachers):

MARILYN ROBB
ST AUGUSTINE
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
Tel. +1-868-735-6377
e-mail: joyfulplace@yahoo.com

For Family Work:

CHUCK ESSER
PHILADELPHIA, PA
USA
Tel. +1-215-349-9428
e-mail: ckesser1@gmail.com

For Languages & Interpreting:

PATXI XABIER ODRIOZOLA
EZEITZA
ERRIBERA GOTIA, ARABA
BASQUE COUNTRY
Tel. +34-630-828554
e-mail: nuxilabi@gmail.com

For Wide World Change:

JULIAN WEISSGLASS
SANTA BARBARA, CA
USA
Tel. +1-805-637-8895
e-mail: julian@weissglass.net

The Re-evaluation Foundation

President:

MIKE MARKOVITS
STAMFORD, CT
USA
Tel. +1-203-536-5413
e-mail: mjmrvts@aol.com, mjmrvts@gmail.com

Send contributions to:

THE RE-EVALUATION
FOUNDATION
P.O. BOX 9292
QUEEN ANNE STATION
SEATTLE, WA 98109
USA



RAINBOW VALLEY, NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA

AUTHORIZED TEACHERS OF RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING
IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

ALGERIA

BADIS FATEH KHIREDDINE
TIPA ZA
Tel. +213 0662675379
e-mail: khiredinebadis@gmail.com

ARGENTINA

SILVINA SPAGNUOLO
CASTELAR, BS AS
Tel. +54-4692-2733
e-mail: silvispag@hotmail.com

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES
NICOLE COONEY
CARDIFF, NSW
Tel. +61 408 938 740
e-mail: nicintaz@hotmail.com

HELEN LAMONT
EAST GOSFORD, NSW
Tel. +61 403 454 004
e-mail: helenlamont7@gmail.com

JANE LESLEY
MARRICKVILLE,
SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 2 7901 9655
email: jh2204@gmail.com

JO PERRY
RANDWICK,
SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 410 413 467
e-mail: jp44213@gmail.com

JOANI LEWIS
GRANVILLE, SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 423 696 303
e-mail: 59honey@gmail.com

ANN PORCINO
MOSMAN, SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 417 266 301
e-mail: atporcino@gmail.com

SANDY WILDER
MORUYA, NSW
Tel. +61-407-402-021
e-mail: southernsandpiper@gmail.com

LAUREL WADDELL
BEGA, NSW
Tel. +61-3-62233716
e-mail: waddelllaurel@hotmail.com

NORTHERN
TERRITORY

KATHY BANNISTER
MILLNER (DARWIN), NT
Tel. +61-408-895-621
e-mail: kathrynannbannister1@gmail.com

BARBARA MOLANUS
ALICE SPRINGS, NT
Tel. +61-439 827 160
e-mail: barbstar.m@gmail.com

QUEENSLAND

MARIAN BOMAN
BRISBANE, QLD
Tel. +61-402 396 547
e-mail: bomannm2@gmail.com

MARGARET PESTORIUS
CAIRNS, QLD
Tel. +61-7-4052-1563
e-mail: margaret@cairnspacetimepeace.org

TASMANIA

JODIE EPPER
HOBART, TAS
Tel. +61 03 6223 4745
e-mail: jodie.epper@yahoo.com

RICHARD JAMES HALE
SOUTH HOBART, TAS
Tel. +61 3622-32690
e-mail: richardjameshal@gmail.com

ANDREW DOUBE
SOUTH HOBART, TAS
Tel. +61 0429-015-371
e-mail: andre.doube@gmail.com

PAMELA MEARS
KINGSTON, TAS
Tel. +61-427-348-766
e-mail: pamelamears@gmail.com

BASQUE
COUNTRY

(Between France & Spain)

BIZKAIA

FERMIN PORRAS
BOCANEGRA
GORLIZ, BIZKAIA
Tel. +34-666-76-79-16
e-mail: fermin.porras2@gmail.com

YOLANDA SAEZ GOMEZ
SONDIKA, BIZKAIA
Tel. +94-6549613
e-mail: yolanda.saez@gmail.com

BENIN,
REPUBLIC OF

ERIC AMOUSSOU-GUENOU
COTONOU
Tel. +229-9420-8255,
+229-9747 5843,
+229-98765126
e-mail: guenoueric2@yahoo.fr

ANGELO AMOUSSOU-
GUENOU
COTONOU
Tel. +229-93577813,
+229-6454 2284
e-mail: angeloofranz@yahoo.fr

ALAIN SAKITI
COTONOU
Tel. +229-9623-2162
e-mail: freshsak@yahoo.fr

BOLIVIA

PATRICIA IBARRA
BAJO ACHUMANI-
ZONA SUR
LA PAZ
Tel. +591-2-279-7970
e-mail: pibarrasi@gmail.com

CAMEROON

FELIX NKAM
DOUALA
Tel. +237 699 633 549
e-mail: nkamfelix@yahoo.fr

CANADA

ALBERTA
AMBER FORNELLI
CALGARY, AB
Tel. +1-403-999-2899
e-mail: aformelli@alumni.sfu.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA

KERRI WALL
FERNIE, BC
Tel. +1-250-423-6986
e-mail: kerriwall@hotmail.com

BILL HORNE
WELLS, BC
Tel. +1-250-994-2332
e-mail: bhorne@netbistro.com

CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC
WELLS, BC
Tel. +1-250-994-2332
e-mail: claire@clairerearta.com

ELIZABETH SHEFRIN
GABRIOLA ISLAND, BC
Tel. +1-250-247-7476
e-mail: simaelizabeth@gmail.com

SAMANTHA SANDERSON
SALT SPRING ISLAND, BC
Tel. +1-250-537-9296
e-mail: swsanderson22@gmail.com

BETH CRUISE
VICTORIA, BC
Tel. +1-250-727-9163
e-mail: rcbethcruise@gmail.com

NEW BRUNSWICK

MARY ANN COLEMAN
WATERFORD, NB
Tel. +1-506-433-5232
e-mail: macoleman.nb@gmail.com

ONTARIO

JEAN HANSON
OTTAWA, ON
Tel. +1-613-321-2765
e-mail: jeanh@magma.ca

LIZ HANSON
OTTAWA, ON
Tel. +1-917-656-7560
e-mail: hansonlizzy@gmail.com

QUÉBEC

MANUEL MEUNE
MONTREAL, QC
Tel. +1-514-522-3273
e-mail: manuelmeune@hotmail.com

ANNIE POTTER
NORTH HATLEY, QC
Tel. +1-819-919-4658
e-mail: anniewrite@gmail.com

CHILE

REGION METROPOLI-
TANA DE SANTIAGO
ELLEN TAIT
LA REINA, SANTIAGO, RM
Tel. +56-99-873-1199
e-mail: ellentait@hotmail.com

EMMA MORALES LAFATA
PUENTE ALTO, RM
Tel. +56-2-265-3962
e-mail: e.edithm@hotmail.com

ROSA PONCE DIAZ
PUENTE ALTO, RM
Tel. +56-2-265 1892
e-mail: rosaponce2004@hotmail.com

CHINESE
MAINLAND

*See Hong Kong and Taiwan
under separate listings*

HEILONGJIANG
PROVINCE

HANG DONG
DAQING, HEILONGJIANG
Tel. +86-138 368 68886
e-mail: 16551538@99.com

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

WU RONGRONG
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86-18698558680
e-mail: wurongrong85@hotmail.com

SHAN MIN
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86-13777499439
e-mail: 29245908@qq.com

CHEN ZHENZHEN
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86-13588482806
e-mail: 106181691@qq.com

HE YUEQIAN
WENZHOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86 4439-492347
e-mail: 1136114648@qq.com

FUJIAN PROVINCE

DOU JUN
XIAMEN, FUJIAN
Tel. +86-135 8186 2375
e-mail: candy.dou@foxmail.com

JIANGXI PROVINCE

CHEN MINGRUI
JINGDESHEN
JIAGXI PROVINCE
Tel. +86-13517989423
e-mail: 583918555@qq.com

WEN YOU
JINGDEZHEN SHI,
JIANGXI SHENG
Tel. +86-13407989707
e-mail: 13082203@qq.com

GUANGDONG
PROVINCE

LIYA DONG
GUANGZHOU
Tel. +86-13928853317
e-mail: liya.banks@gmail.com

HA YINGMIN
GUANGZHOU
GUANGDONG
Tel. +86-20-13660042174
e-mail: ha3721@gmail.com

WANG AILI
GUANGZHOU
GUANGDONG
Tel. +86-13527017427
e-mail: aili_wy98@hotmail.com

LI GUODONG
SHENZHEN
Tel. +86-755-13652302896
e-mail: 61076038@qq.com

GUIZHOU PROVINCE

ZHOU HUAQIONG
DUYUN, GUIZHOU
Tel. +86-18685060717 (work)
e-mail: emily_zh@sina.com

SHANDONG PROVINCE

WANG JIMENG
YANTAI, SHANDONG
Tel. +86-15905352086
e-mail: yishengrutong@icloud.com

HENAN PROVINCE

CHUNTIE NIU
ZHENGZHOU, HENAN
Tel. +86-235 2669 5052
e-mail: 244963596@99.com

COLOMBIA

DISTRITO CAPITAL
DALBA NATALIA LINARES
VALDERRAMA
BOGOTA, DC
Tel. +57-316 232 5181
e-mail: dalbanatalialinares@gmail.com

SANTANDER

MARIA STELLA GOMEZ
DE VELASCO
BUCARAMANGA
SANTANDER
Tel. +57 6459900,
+57-314 4442076
e-mail: mastela7@hotmail.com

CORNWALL

CLIVE MARTIN
CALSTOCK
Tel. +44-1822 833680
e-mail: gurumayi.ym@virgin.net

DENMARK

SJAELLAND
KARI CATHARINA SOFIA
RASMUSSEN
HILLEROD
Tel. +45 61 654 70 71
e-mail: kari.catharina@gmail.com

MARIA GJERULLF
SCHMIDT
KOLDING
Tel. +506-4523316525
e-mail: mariaschmidt@gmail.com

EL SALVADOR

MARÍA LORENA CUÉLLAR
BARANDIARÁN
SAN SALVADOR
Tel. +503-2260 6568 (h),
+503-7761-0123 (cell)
e-mail: marialorenacuellar@hotmail.com

ENGLAND

NORTH EAST
JEAN TURNER
DARLINGTON
Tel. +44 1833 660172
e-mail: jeanturner22@hotmail.co.uk

NORTH WEST

FIONA FRANK
HALTON, LANCASTER
Tel. +44-7778-737681
e-mail: fionafrank@googlemail.com

TYRA TILL
MACCLESFIELD
CHESHIRE
Tel. +44-1625 260260
e-mail: tyra@tyratill.com

YORKSHIRE &
THE HUMBER

JULIE LONGDEN
ALLTERTON
Tel. +44-1274-481067
e-mail: julielongden123@yahoo.com

ALISON NORRIS
SHEFFIELD
Tel. +44-114-2435732
e-mail: anorrisrc@gmail.com

EAST MIDLANDS

PAULINE HAMMOND BALL
WELLINGBOROUGH
Tel. +44 1933 403746
e-mail: Pauline.ball@uwclub.net

WEST MIDLANDS

JENNY MARTIN
BIRMINGHAM
Tel. +44-121-240-0998
e-mail: families52@hotmail.com

MARK HINTON
COVENTRY
WEST MIDLANDS
Tel. +44-24 76 714 417
e-mail: mark.hinton@gmail.com

NETTA CARTWRIGHT
STAFFORD
STAFFSHIRE
Tel. +44-1785-613585

JUDE HAWES
NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME
Tel. +44-793-246-4478
e-mail: jude.hawes@snsclub.org.uk

MARGUERITE PALMER
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
Tel. +44-01782 630751
e-mail: margueritepalmer@aol.com

EAST OF ENGLAND

KARL LAM
CAMBRIDGE
Tel. +44-1638-604101
e-mail: karl@parsonage1.plus.com

NICKY XANDORA
BLOXHAM, OXON
Tel. +44 1295 722639
e-mail: nickyxandora@gmail.com

STELLA DARKE
SOUTH NEWINGTON
BANBURY
Tel. +44 1295 720096
e-mail: darkestella@gmail.com

ALIMA ADAMS
BURWELL
Tel. +44-1223-210561
e-mail: alimaadams@hotmail.com

LONDON

ANTHONY LEETE
LONDON
Tel. +44-207-613-0535
e-mail: anthony.leeete@live.co.uk

ALEX SAUNDERS
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-470-9756
e-mail: alex.saunders22@gmail.com

TERRY DAY
WALTHAMSTOW
LONDON
Tel. +44-20-8520-5337
e-mail: terryday1@talktalk.net

CATHERINE GOLDSTEIN
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-809-3010
e-mail: catherine.goldstein@hotmail.com

MARY THOMPSON
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-340-7552
e-mail: marythompson68@gmail.com

ANNA MOORHOUSE
LONDON
Tel. +44-171-20 8771-1160
e-mail: anna.moorhouse123@btinternet.com

ANNA VAN HEESWIJK
LONDON
Tel. +44-7732-075-835
e-mail: annavanheeswijk@hotmail.com

PAMELA CARNEGIE
LONDON
Tel. +44-7944411441
e-mail: pamelacarnegie@googlemail.com

ALI BOURNE
LONDON
Tel. +44 20 7733 7253
e-mail: alibourne@hotmail.com

BESS HERBERT
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-6712820
e-mail: bess_herbert@yahoo.com

DORANN VAN HEESWIJK
LONDON
Tel. +44-207-622-6493
e-mail: vhdorann@gmail.com

SAM SILVERLOCK
LONDON
Tel. +44 79133-50510
e-mail: samsilverlock@hotmail.co.uk

FIONA GILVRA Y ADAMSON
LONDON
Tel. +44 208 677 8260
e-mail: fio.adamson@btinternet.com

SOUTH EAST

RACHEL BECK
HOVE
Tel. +44-1273-945856
e-mail: rachelbeckyes@yahoo.co.uk

LEAH THORN
FOLKESTONE, KENT
Tel. +44-1303 488 711
e-mail: leahthorn@hotmail.com

JO SAUNDERS
WINCHESTER, HANTS
Tel. +44-1962-877465
e-mail: jo.saunders@btinternet.com

AGATHA COFFEY
ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA
E. SUSSEX
Tel. +44-1424-428-641
e-mail: agathacoffey@yahoo.com

JAN WOODLING
NEWHAVEN, E. SUSSEX
Tel. +44-7747-784613
e-mail: janwoodling@aol.com

SOUTH WEST

SHANNON COGGINS
SHEPTON MALLET
SOMERSET
Tel. +44-1749-860767
e-mail: shannoncoggins23@gmail.com

RUTH GOODFELLOW
STROUD
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Tel. +44-7794054623
e-mail: rgoodf@hotmail.com

AL HEAD
TAVISTOCK, DEVON
Tel. +44-1822-616083
e-mail: seaalbatross@btinternet.com

HEATHER NICHOLSON
TOTNES, DEVON
Tel. +44-1803 863717
e-mail: m.heather.nicholson@gmail.com

RICHARD MITCHELL
TOTNES, DEVON
Tel. +44 1803 863717
e-mail: nichmittch@supanet.com

HELEN BOURNE
NEWTON ABBOT, DEVON
Tel. +44 1803 812836
e-mail: helen.bourne52@btinternet.com

NICOLA VINCENT
BURNHAM-ON-SEA
SOMERSET
Tel. +44-1278-782274
e-mail: nk.vincent@btinternet.com

FINLAND

KARJALOHJA
PER VIKTOR HJALMARS-
SON
KARJALOHJA
Tel. +358 400 284 012
e-mail: viktor.hjalmarsson@gmail.com

VILMA MAATTANEN
KARJALOHJA
Tel. +358 402431758
e-mail: vilmaelina@gmail.com

KESKI-UUSIMAA
KAISLI SYRJANEN
Tel. +358 400 711206
e-mail: kaisli@hotmail.com

TURKU

EEVA HAMALAINEN
TURKU
Tel. +358 40 557 9046
e-mail: eeva.hnen@gmail.com

FRANCE

CLAIRE PARAVISINI-
ERNOUF
NICE
Tel. +33-6 87 81 48 12
e-mail: ernoufclaire@yahoo.fr

MARINA DEL CAMPO
VENICE
Tel. +33 6 99 08 83 34
e-mail: marina.loubet@wanadoo.fr

BRIGITTE GUIMBAL
VALBONNE
Tel. +33-4-93-12-93-49
e-mail: bguimbal@free.fr

CATHERINE ALBERTINI
GRASSE
Tel. +33 6 71 63 19 78
e-mail: catherine.1@libertysurf.fr

CAROLINE MAISONNEUVE
CREST
Tel. +33 6 87 36 06 44
e-mail: lelupindeschemins@yahoo.fr

VIRGINIE PHILIPPE
STE ANNE SUR VILAINE
Tel. +33 6 99 12 60 30
e-mail: virginiephilippe@free.fr

CECILE FLOURY-
BUCHALIN
MONTS
Tel. +33-4-72-87-07-81
e-mail: flourybuchalin@gmail.com

CAROLINE WALLACE
LARRÉ
Tel. +33 7 89 51 60 45
e-mail: cwarott@gmail.com

GAELLE LEMEN
SAINT-JACUT-LES-PINS
Tel. +33-2 99 91 47 06
e-mail: gaelle.le-men@orange.fr

JOS SJOLLEMA
NONETTE-ORSONNETTE
Tel. +33-4-73-89-04-95
e-mail: jsjollema@wanadoo.fr

FRÉDÉRIQUE
BRAGUIER
PAU
Tel. +33 5 59-62-26-48
e-mail: frederique.braguier@kivi-fibre.fr

MATHILDE NEROT
FRANCHEVILLE
Tel. +33 4 72 16 92 20
e-mail: mahane@wanadoo.fr

DELPHINE BARBEROT
PURGEROT
Tel. +33 3 84 91 77 71
e-mail: delnew@gmail.com

DANA POWERS
VILLIERS-ST. FRED.
Tel. +33-1-34-89-81-25
e-mail: danapowers26@hotmail.com

JOHN MULLEN
MONTREUIL
Tel. +33-1-48-97-84-52
e-mail: john.mullen@wanadoo.fr

GAMBIA, THE

SAIBA SUSO
SERREKUNDA
Tel. +220 765 3642
e-mail: shybetsuso@gmail.com

GERMANY

ANGELINA HAUG
ESSLINGEN
Tel. +49 0711-5764-8369
e-mail: info@angelinahaug.de

JULIANE CIESLAK
DIETRICH
GOHRISCH
Tel. +49-331-27328040
e-mail: julianecieslak@gmx.de

CLAUDIA BERGER
NAUMBURG SAALE
e-mail: der@stressrat.de

CARSTEN FILOR
BERLIN
Tel. +49-30-61659091
e-mail: c.filor@schoenberlin.de

SUSANNE (SUSI) BRIEL
BERLIN
Tel. +49-176-30419797
e-mail: susi.briel@gmx.de

VERA KOPPEN
BERLIN
Tel. +49-30 231 85 895
e-mail: verakoppen@gmail.com

JULIA SIEBERT
KREFELD
NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN
Tel. +49-2151-395946
e-mail: julia.siebert@ymail.com

KARIN GEORGII
STUTT GART
Tel. +49-711-742562
e-mail: karin.georgii@gmx.de

CORDULA HERCHET-
HOFRICHTER
NEULER
Tel. +49-6221-860159
e-mail: veit-hofrichter@gmx.de

EVE ABRAHAM
KIRCHSEON
BEI MÜNCHEN
Tel. +49-8091-518258
e-mail: evejesko@yahoo.de

GHANA

REGINALD KPAKPO
ACCRA
Tel. +233-244-818-805
e-mail: reginald_k84@yahoo.com

GREECE

LOUKIA PIKI
ZAKYNTHOS
Tel. +30-26950-24562
e-mail: yogainzakynthos@gmail.com

PERIKLIX XONDROS
XANTHI
Tel. +30-25410 67250
e-mail: periklixondros@hotmail.com

KATERINA STAVROPOU-
LOU-VLACHOU
XANTHI
Tel. +30-25410-77308

GUINEA

MAHAMADOU CELLOU
DIALLO
CONAKRY
e-mail: celloud79@gmail.com

HAITI

CARMEN RODRIGUEZ
SANCHEZ
Tel. +569-8469-3924
e-mail: carmenrodriguezsanchez@gmail.com

HONDURAS

ALICIA
e-mail: alyfunes30@gmail.com

HUNGARY

VAJDA VIOLETA
BUDAPEST
Tel. +36 30 953 0822
e-mail: vajdavioleta@yahoo.com

SUZSANNA LAKATOS NE
DANO
NYIRBATOR
Tel. +36 30 392 2855
e-mail: lakatosnedano.2015@gmail.com

INDIA

ANDHRA PRADESH
VANDANA DEGAONKAR
HYDERABAD
Tel. +91-40-27562681
e-mail: Degaonkarvandana@gmail.com

J.B.V. LAKSHMI
HYDERABAD
Tel. +91-40-27017040
e-mail: jvsubrahmanyam@yahoo.co.in

KARNATAKA

JAGANNATH SHASHIKALA
BANGALORE
Tel. +91-9902584557
e-mail: sjsashikala@gmail.com

TAMIL NADU

SR. BENEDICTA
THENI, TAMIL NADU
Tel. +91-4546-253907,
+91 944 360 7921
e-mail: pushpamfdo@gmail.com

WEST BENGAL

KAJAL SEN
KOLKATA
Tel. +33 246 06646
e-mail: sen76kajal@gmail.com

SUMITA ROY
KOLKATA
Tel. +33-245-58043
e-mail: sumita444@gmail.com

IRAN

VIDA MOZAFARIEH
TEHRAN
Tel. +98-21-22604145
e-mail: vida5978@yahoo.com

IRELAND

MAURICE HEARNE
LUCAN, CO. DUBLIN
Tel. +353-87-6784764

IRELAND, NORTHERN

SHEILA FAIRON
PORTRUSH, CO. ANTRIM
Tel. +44-28-70-823193
e-mail: fairon@fastmail.fm

LINDA O'DONOVAN
BANGOR, CO. DOWN
Tel. +44-28-9147-8655
e-mail: linda.odonovan@btinternet.com

ISRAEL

MICHAEL NOY MALKA
MOSHAV HAYOGEV
Tel. +972-775501523
e-mail: noyr.rc.il@gmail.com

ORNAM SHUMAN

BETT SHEARIM
Tel. +972-4-9531528
e-mail: ornashuman1@gmail.com

TAMI SHAMIR

SHEFAYIM
Tel. +972-9-9584447
e-mail: tamisb@netvision.net.il

ITALY

JUNE MACKAY
CAREZZANO
ALESSANDRIA
Tel. +390-131-839-381

GIANNA BELTRAME
VICENZA
Tel. +39 349 724 2247
e-mail: giabeltrame@gmail.com

IVORY COAST

ZOUNON KOFFI URBAIN
CYRILLE
COCODY
Tel. +225 46 05 96 18
e-mail: zounoncyrille@gmail.com

JAPAN

HONSHU
MIYUKI TERADAIRA
MATSUMOTO-SHI
NAGANO PREF
Tel. +81-90-7019-6082
e-mail: miyuki.tag1115@gmail.com

TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

MICHIKO (JO) IWAKI
OObU-CITY, AICHI-KEN
Tel. +81-70-5032-3359
e-mail: ilovejo3700@
yahoo.co.jp

OKINAWA
TOMOMI SUZUKI
OKINAWA-CITY
OKINAWA
Tel. +81-70-5480-0189
e-mail: tomomyjpo@
yahoo.co.jp

SHIKOKU
KAORI YOSHIOKA
TAKAMATSU-SHI
KAGAWA-KEN
Tel. +81-80-3164-2288
e-mail: sorano_iroiro@
yahoo.co.jp

AKARI TAKECHI
NARUTO CITY
TOKUSHIMA
Tel. +81-080-3928-4900
e-mail: akanotake@
yahoo.co.jp

KOREA
SANGWOO KWON
SEOUL
Tel. +82-10-7306-4746
e-mail: sangwkwon@
yahoo.com

MALAYSIA
CHENG IMM TAN
PENANG
Tel. +60-164214092
e-mail: cit2288@gmail.com

MEXICO
OAXACA
JUDITH BAUTISTA PEREZ
SAN FRANCISCO
LACHIGOLO
Tel. +52-951-165-6869
e-mail: judithb57@
yahoo.com.mx

QUERETARO
CONCEPCIÓN MÁRTINEZ
GASCA
QUERETARO, QUERETARO
Tel. +52-49-74 09 89

AGUASCALIENTES
CUCA MÁRTINEZ GASCA
AGUASCALIENTES
e-mail: refugiomartinez
gasca@gmail.com

MOROCCO
ANAS RAGHIB
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212-634512514
e-mail: an.raghib@gmail.com

SARRA EL GUERRARI
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212 624671253
e-mail: mouna.book@
hotmail.fr

NOURJHANE MAHMANI
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212 707033435
e-mail: nourjhane.
mahamani@gmail.com

ABDERRAHIM AMALOUZ
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212 604-127919
e-mail: amalouz.abdo@
gmail.com

ESSALHA OUAFA
Tel. +212 0662676200

NETHERLANDS
FRYSLÂN
INGRID DOLLEE
LEEUWARDEN, FR
Tel. +31-58-8446918
e-mail: i.dollee@gmail.com

HENNIE JONGSMA
LEEUWARDEN, FR
Tel. +31-58-2137991
e-mail: jongsma1@chello.nl

WYTSKE VISSER
LJOUWERT, FR
Tel. +31-58-2672084,
+31 (0)6 38455620
e-mail: wytskevisser.coe@
gmail.com

ANNIE HOEKSTRA
LJOUWERT, FR
Tel. +31-58-2800853
e-mail: annie.hoekstra@
planet.nl

JAN VENDERBOS
WERGEA, FR
Tel. +31-58-2673543
e-mail: j.venderbos7@
upcmail.nl

ADALGARD WILLEMSMA
BITGUM, FR
Tel. +31-58-2163474
e-mail: adalgard.willemsma@
gmail.com

HANNIE SCHURMAN
WIRDUM, FR
Tel. +31-58-2552659
e-mail: hannie.schuurman@
gmail.com

GELDERLAND
NIRUPA SHANTIPREKASH
ARNHEM
Tel. +31 268486183
e-mail: nirupa@antenna.nl

ALBIEN HENDRIKS
ARNHEM
Tel. +31-26-4434168
e-mail: albienhendriks@
gmail.com

MARLENE MELFOR
ARNHEM
Tel. +31-26-3819221
e-mail: m.melfor@chello.nl

BRIGITTE THEEUWEN
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-323-7663
e-mail: b.theuwen@
antenna.nl

NICOLE KIENHUIS
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-3239769
e-mail: nkienhuis@
hotmail.com

JULIA KOSTELIJK
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-3568317
e-mail: jmkostelijck@
upcmail.nl

KEES JANSEN
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-3505405
e-mail: bjoeticees@upcmail.nl

MONNIE PAASHUIS
DOETINCHEM, GE
Tel. +31 314 344453
e-mail: monniepaashuis@
gmail.com

OVERIJSSSEL
ANNEKE GROOT
DEVENTER, OV
Tel. +31-570-769170
e-mail: anneke@amao.nl

TANJA KIENHUIS
OLDENZAAL, OV
Tel. +31 541 511990
e-mail: tkienhuis@yahoo.com

UTRECHT
NICOLET GROOT
HUIS TER HEIDE (UT), UT
Tel. +31-30-2210977
e-mail: burostrafwerk@
gmail.com

ROSEMARIE MELENHORST-
MULDERS
EEMNES, UT
Tel. +31-35-5387098
e-mail: rosemarie.
melenhorst@planet.nl

ZUID-HOLLAND
JULIA TELTING
VOORBURG
Tel. +31-487-522304
e-mail: juliatelting@
hotmail.com

ROEL BOSCH
ROTTERDAM, ZH
Tel. +31 6 521 999 83
e-mail: roelbosch@
ms-panta-rhei.nl

NEW ZEALAND
HEMAIMA CARKEEK
WIREMU
OTAKI
Tel. +64-6-364-6512,
+64-21-100 4120
e-mail: hcwiremu@gmail.com

CARMEN CARKEEK
OTAKI
Tel. +64 6 364 0166
e-mail: carkeema@gmail.com

ALISON KENNEDY
NELSON
Tel. +64-3-548-8467
e-mail: ali.kennedy@xtra.co.nz

AMI KENNEDY
NELSON
Tel. +64-3-386-1025
e-mail: amikgrowingfood@
gmail.com

FRANCA MORANI
TAKAKA
GOLDEN BAY
Tel. +64-3-525-6202
e-mail: francamorani@
hotmail.it

GIULIANA MORANI
TAKAKA
GOLDEN BAY
Tel. +64-3-525-8389
e-mail: giulimorani@
hotmail.com

DIANE SHANNON
CHRISTCHURCH
Tel. +64 3 332 2360
e-mail: diane.shannon@
cdhb.health.nz

NIKKI BERRY
CHRISTCHURCH
CANTERBURY
Tel. +64-3-981-8729
e-mail: nikki@sing.co.nz

UMI ASAKA
NORTH DUNEDIN
Tel. +64 0211 093218
e-mail: a.rose.dream.0929@
gmail.com

LANCE CABLK
DEVONPORT, AUCLAND
Tel. +64-9-446-6546
e-mail: lcablkl01010@
gmail.com

NICARAGUA
GUSNARA DEL CARMEN
BUSTOS HURTADO
SAN MARCOS
Tel. +505-88640035

NIGERIA
**FEDERAL CAPITAL
TERRITORY**
AKUDOLU IFEYINWA
ABUJA, FCT
Tel. +234-806-2095171

MUSA ZAINAB
MATTAMA DISTRICT
ABUJA
Tel. +234 8065449386
e-mail: yaanatumusa@
gmail.com

KADUNA
HANNATU BORORO MUSA
KADUNA
Tel. +234-62-210976
e-mail: hannybororo@
gmail.com

JOHN KAZACHIANG
GARBA
KADUNA
Tel. +234-81642-05595 (work)
e-mail: johnkazachiang@
gmail.com

HAUWA B. MUSA
KADUNA SOUTH
Tel. +234 070 304 71355
e-mail: hauwabmusa_385@
yahoo.com

LAGOS
TEMITOPE FAKUNLE
ATEGUNLE, LAGOS
Tel. +234-8051214135
e-mail: tope_last@yahoo.com

ONDO
ADEKUNLE AKINOLA
AKUNGBA AKOKO, ONDO
Tel. +234-803-656-5310
e-mail: adekunleakinola99@
gmail.com

BANKOLE AKINSELURE
AKURE
Tel. +234 0070342152-33
e-mail: bankoleakinselure@
gmail.com

NORWAY
ANNE HELGEDAGSRUD
OSLO
Tel. +47 909 62 061
e-mail: helgedagsrud@
gmail.com

SIMON JAMES-EIDE
OSLO
Tel. +47 906 333 50
e-mail: sj-eide@hotmail.com

BRITA HELLEBORG
PORSGRUNN
TELEMAR
Tel. +47-35-51-31-50
e-mail: hhellebo@online.no

STEIN HELLEBORG
PORSGRUNN
TELEMAR
Tel. +47-91153073
e-mail: steinh_5@hotmail.com

PERU
NANCY CALLANAUPA
MESCCO
SANTA ANA, CUSCO
Tel. +51-084-777294
e-mail: nancy9andes9@
hotmail.com

ROSIO DE JESUS RAMOS
FERNANDEZ
CUSCO
Tel. +51 984351440
e-mail: rosiodejesus14@
gmail.com

PHILIPPINES
NIK LEUNG
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, USA
Class taught over the Internet for
the Philippines
Tel. +1-703-346-8351
e-mail: nikleung@gmail.com

POLAND
JACEK STRZEMIECZNY
WARSZAWA
Tel. +48 601 21 80 32
e-mail: jacek.strzemieczny@
ceo.org.pl

YVONNE ODROWAZ-
PIENIAZEK
JONKOWO
Tel. +48-502-594-8333,
+48-89-512-9356
e-mail: yvooodr@gmail.com

ZOFIA OLEJNIK-HASIUK
LODZ
Tel. +48-519088375
e-mail: mahas@go2.pl

PUERTO RICO
MARIA JUDITH COLON
SAN JUAN, PR
Tel. +1-646-319-9403
e-mail: majuco4150@msn.com

LEYKAMARIE ALMA-
BONILLA
SAN JUAN, PR
Tel. +1-787-758-7747
e-mail: leykalma@yahoo.com

YARA ALMA-BONILLA
SAN JUAN, PR
Tel. +1-787-431-5795
e-mail: yarisady@yahoo.com

NELIDA ORTIZ ROLON
BAYAMON, PR
Tel. +1-787-222-8929
e-mail: nelly16148@
gmail.com

ROMANIA
MIHAELA BERINDEANU
TIMISOARA
Tel. +40-56-167589
e-mail: mikiberindeanu@
yahoo.com

LAZAR IULIA
MAGDALENA
ARAD
Tel. +40-357-402283
e-mail: iuliaml@yahoo.com

SCOTLAND
MARGARET GAULT
FRASERBURGH
ABERDEENSHIRE
Tel. +44-134-653-2487
e-mail: margaret.gault@
virgin.net

MICHAEL SPRING
EDINBURGH
Tel. +44 131 337 4990
e-mail: mikespring@
hotmail.com

FIONNTAN (JOHN)
HURLEY
MUSSELBURGH
Tel. +44-7931-355-348
e-mail: jf1hurley@aol.com

BARBARA K. SCHMIDT
DUNOON, ARGYLL
Tel. +44 1369-704-707
e-mail: barbarakschmidt@
btinternet.com

**SOUTH AFRICA,
REPUBLIC OF**

GAUTENG
ROSALYN CASSIDY
JOHANNESBURG
Tel. +27 11 615 3572
e-mail: rcassidy423@
gmail.com

WESTERN CAPE
HEIN KLEINBOOI
BRACKENFELL
Tel. +27-21-4479438
e-mail: hein.kleinbooi@
gmail.com

MARGARET GREEN
CAPE TOWN,
WESTERN CAPE
Tel. +27-21-761-3027
e-mail: mgreen@mweb.co.za

ZAAHIDA HARTLEY
CAPE TOWN,
WESTERN CAPE
Tel. +27 083-383-0193
e-mail: Zaaahida.Hartley@
westerncape.gov.za

SOUTH SUDAN
VICTOR BATALI SILAS
YEI
Tel. +211-955203537
e-mail: victorsillas06@
yahoo.com

ADE MARY MBARAZA
JUBA
Tel. +256 7 886 888 10
e-mail: amaryasa17@
gmail.com

SPAIN
OSCAR ARGUMOSA SAINZ
PENAGOS, SANTANDER
CANTABRIA
Tel. +34-942-554338,
+34-66079485
e-mail: oscarargumosa@
gmail.com

ANDREA AJA MARURI
BEZANA, CANTABRIA
Tel. +34-605875997
e-mail: milpanesyepes@
gmail.com

SWEDEN

KRISTIAN LUND
FALUN
Tel. +46-247 10483
e-mail: kristian@norsbro.se

ANNIKA FEHLING
VISBY
Tel. +46-708467203
e-mail: annika@annikafehling.com

TAIWAN**HUALIEN**

YIH-SHEUE LIN
SHOUPENG, HUALIEN
Tel. +886-934288728
e-mail: ysl@gms.ndhu.edu.tw

TANZANIA

MARY MWITA
ARUSHA
Tel. +255 754520109
e-mail: marymwita2011@gmail.com

ELIASENYA ISSANGYA
ARUMERU
Tel. +255 784982720

ELLY MASAM
ARUMERU
Tel. +255 784729648
e-mail: emasam2@yahoo.com

MBONEA MFINANGA
ARUSHA
Tel. +255 753884001
e-mail: mboneamfinanga184@gmail.com

THAILAND

PERMSUK AMP-
ORNCHARAT
BANGKOK
Tel. +66-87-688-9692
e-mail: permsuk.a@gmail.com

TED MAYER
BANGPAKOK
RATURANA
Tel. +66-86-599-4802
e-mail: morethanmeetsthai@gmail.com

TOGO

AMEDAVI EDOH
LOME
Tel. +228 9253 5816
e-mail: edohbarnabe@gmail.com

EDMOND EKUE HETTAH
LOME
Tel. +228 9236 6243
e-mail: ekuegan2004@gmail.com

KOKOUVI ABOBOYAYA
KAME
Tel. +228-9198-2465
e-mail: cooleo2009@gmail.com

JENNIFER GBEKOU
Tel. +228 93 62 05 16/
99 99 77 17
e-mail: jennifergbekou96@gmail.com

**UNITED
KINGDOM**

See Cornwall, England,
Scotland, and Wales

**UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA**

(Within States by Zip Code)

ALASKA

BRIDGET HITCHCOCK
SITKA, AK
Tel. +1-907-747-3102
e-mail: bridgethitchcock@hotmail.com

ARIZONA

CATHERINE LAND
EVILSIZOR
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-520-261-1628
e-mail: azcland@gmail.com

BRENDA CASEY
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-520-981-7356
e-mail: brencasey@yahoo.com

LOUISE GOOD
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-808-381-2939
e-mail: hanellingood@gmail.com

CAROL ROSE
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-312-933-8986
e-mail: carolrose77@gmail.com

GENE GALAZAN
PRESCOTT, AZ
Tel. +1-928-443-9100
e-mail: insiderartist@gmail.com

ARKANSAS

CHARLOTTE DOWNEY
EUREKA SPRINGS, AR
Tel. +1-479-253-6721
e-mail: cdowney@ipa.net

PATTY MINOR
FAYETTEVILLE, AR
Tel. +1-479-935-0267
e-mail: minorbiz@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

BARBARA BORING
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO,
CA
Tel. +1-206-465-2430
e-mail: bboring@aol.com

JULIAN WEISSGLASS
SANTA BARBARA, CA
Tel. +1-805-637-8895
e-mail: julian@weissglass.net

DAVORA TETENS
SEBASTOPOL, CA
Tel. +1-917-518-7456
e-mail: davoratetens@gmail.com

EMILY SIEGEL
EUREKA, CA
Tel. +1-707-845-2401
e-mail: emily5@sonic.net

COLORADO

JULIE FOX-RUBIN
BASALT, CO
Tel. +1-970-319-1744
e-mail: julie@foxrubin.com

CONNECTICUT

JOANNE BRAY
STAMFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-273-3058
e-mail: jnbray@aol.com

MIKE MARKOVITS
STAMFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-536-5413
e-mail: mjmarkovits@aol.com,
mkmkmarkovits@gmail.com

TREY VAN NORSTRAND
STAMFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-325-0940
e-mail: chiahog@yahoo.com

FLORIDA

HENRY HALL
TALLAHASSEE, FL
Tel. +1-850-656-2207
e-mail: henryhall6@gmail.com

LISA TRIPP
TALLAHASSEE, FL
e-mail: Lisatripp1@gmail.com

DENNIS LEFILS
TALLAHASSEE, FL
Tel. +1-850-421-1930
e-mail: dennis.lefilis@fldoe.org

DEBO POWERS
TALLAHASSEE, FL
Tel. +1-406-407-0787
e-mail: debopowers@gmail.com

ALYSSA ZUCKER
GAINESVILLE, FL
Tel. +1-352-505-9119
e-mail: alyssa.zucker@gmail.com

ELENA MURATORI
KEY LARGO, FL
Tel. +1-305-453-1835
e-mail: seamaid55@yahoo.com

CHARLOTTE DOWNEY
GULFPORT, FL
Tel. +1-479-253-6721
e-mail: cdowney@ipa.net

GLENDA FINDLAY
GULFPORT, FL
Tel. +1-917-767-5515
e-mail: glendafindlay@gmail.com

MYRNA CHARRY
PORT CHARLOTTE, FL
Tel. +1-212-365-4695
e-mail: myrnabcharry@gmail.com

LAUREN SPIRO
VENICE, FL
Tel. +1-703-862-6512
e-mail: laurenspiro1@gmail.com

IDAHO

KATHY SCABBYROBE
LAPWAI, ID
Tel. +1-208-791-8711
e-mail: kscabbyrobe@yahoo.com

PAM PIPER-RUTH
BOISE, ID
Tel. +1-208-344-5951
e-mail: piperruth@msn.com

PETRA POLLACK
BOISE, ID
Tel. +1-208-362-5587
e-mail: pettra.pollack@gmail.com

ILLINOIS

ALYSSA TATE
CHICAGO, IL
Tel. +1-773-680-9767
e-mail: alytate@gmail.com

KATE INSOLIA
URBANA, IL
Tel. +1-773-216-8650
e-mail: kjinsolia@gmail.com

EDNA VIRUELL FUENTES
URBANA, IL
Tel. +1-313-550-8022
e-mail: eviruell@gmail.com

INDIANA

PATRICIA TURNER
FORT WAYNE, IN
Tel. +1-260-744-7511
e-mail: medina_46803@yahoo.com

IOWA

JANET COOK
AMES, IA
Tel. +1-515-388-3824
e-mail: jancooks@gmail.com

MAGGIE LA WARE
AMES, IA
Tel. +1-518-268-1732
e-mail: mlaware@iastate.edu

LOUISIANA

AMA ROGAN
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Tel. +1-504-650-1295
e-mail: arogan@tulane.edu

JULIE LAUSÉ
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Tel. +1-504-202-2011
e-mail: julie.lause@gmail.com

TANYA M. JONES
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Tel. +1-917-686-3022
e-mail: tmjones.822@gmail.com

ELAINE CLÉMENT
SAINT MARTINVILLE, LA
Tel. +1-337-257-1592
e-mail: cadienne@gmail.com

MAINE

CYNTHIA PHINNEY
LIVERMORE FALLS, ME
Tel. +1-207-491-9928
e-mail: cynth@gwi.net

ANNA SHAPLEY-QUINN
MONROE, ME
Tel. +1-207-525-3323
e-mail: anna.shapleyquinn@gmail.com

BONNIE TOMASH
SKOWHEGAN, ME
Tel. +1-207-474-0903
e-mail: btomash@msad54.org

MARYLAND

HELENE KASS
COLUMBIA, MD
Tel. +1-410-992-9505
e-mail: helenekass@gmail.com

MARY VIGGIANI
OWINGS MILLS, MD
Tel. +1-410-356-4069
e-mail: mgvigig@hotmail.com

DANTE DE TABLAN
BALTIMORE, MD
Tel. +1-540-292-2822
e-mail: detab1@aol.com

PETER DWYER
BALTIMORE, MD
Tel. +1-410-464-1827
e-mail: p.c.dwyer44@gmail.com

JOY KROEGER-MAPPES
FROSTBURG, MD
Tel. +1-301-689-3745
e-mail: jkroeger@frostburg.edu

MASSACHUSETTS

BETSY FEICK
FLORENCE, MA
Tel. +1-413-584-1090
e-mail: bf@betsyfeick.com

SUSANNE (SUE) WALKER
NORTH ADAMS, MA
Tel. +1-413-663-7396
e-mail: greenwalker@verizon.net

IARA CURY
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
Tel. +1-714-914-8714
e-mail: iraparcury@gmail.com

DUEY KOL
LYNN, MA
Tel. +1-617-669-3404
e-mail: dueykol@gmail.com

ROBERT (BOB) WALD
TEWKSBURY, MA
Tel. +1-978-590-8172
e-mail: rwald@alum.bu.edu

SABRA DOW
NEWBURYPORT, MA
Tel. +1-978-465-2766
e-mail: sabradow@yahoo.com

JENNIFER WEXLER
CANTON, MA
Tel. +1-617-910-7848
e-mail: jenfexshayndle@gmail.com

CARLOS ROJAS ALVAREZ
BOSTON, MA
Tel. +1-857-919-8468
e-mail: crercr.rojas7@gmail.com

DIANE BALSER
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
Tel. +1-617-390-5660
e-mail: dibalscr@comcast.net

KELLY BATES
BOSTON, MA
Tel. +1-617-233-5395
e-mail: kbatesrc@gmail.com

JOAN KARP
CAMBRIDGE, MA
Tel. +1-617-864-2857
e-mail: j-karp@comcast.net

AMY RICHARDSON
LARKIN
EAST FALMOUTH, MA
Tel. +1-508-563-6934
e-mail: amylarkin@gmail.com

MICHELLE GERHARD
JASNÝ
VINEYARD HAVEN, MA
Tel. +1-508-693-7823
e-mail: mvyvet@aol.com

MICHIGAN

CATHERINE FISCHER
ANN ARBOR, MI
Tel. +1-734-395-5244
e-mail: catherinedfischer@gmail.com

M'LI'S BARTLETT
DEXTER, MI
Tel. +1-734-474-2723
e-mail: mlis@umich.edu

PAM OATIS
DUNDEE, MI
Tel. +1-734-279-1800
e-mail: pam.oatis@gmail.com

JOHN KIELY
DUNDEE, MI
Tel. +1-734-279-1800
e-mail: jkiely@vmc.org

CINDY TOBIAS
DETROIT, MI
Tel. +1-313-842-1245
e-mail: wmwost120@gmail.com

CHRISTINA KELLY
EAST LANSING, MI
Tel. +1-517-574-5543
e-mail: ckelly@umich.edu

MINNESOTA

CLAUDIA MURPHY
MOORHEAD, MN
Tel. +1-518-466-6904
e-mail: cmm214@aol.com

MONTANA

DEBO POWERS
POLEBRIDGE, MT
Tel. +1-406-407-0787
e-mail: debopowers@gmail.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

WENDY BYRN
SULLIVAN, NH
Tel. +1-603-847-9621
e-mail: dervish@myfairpoint.net

NEW JERSEY

CARL HEATH
MAPLEWOOD, NJ
Tel. +1-973-327-2740
e-mail: ceheath@verizon.net

MOIRA WILKINSON
MONTCLAIR, NJ
Tel. +1-646-265-2069
e-mail: moirawilkinson@gmail.com

ODELIA SHARGIAN
TENAFLY, NJ
Tel. +1-201-560-7872
e-mail: oshargian@gmail.com

RICKIE KASHDAN
LONG BRANCH, NJ
Tel. +1-732-222-1685
e-mail: kashdan@comcast.net

CAROLYN SMITH
GILLETTE, NJ
Tel. +1-908-578-2235
e-mail: vterinni@gmail.com

MATTHEW FRIERSON
RIVERTON, NJ
Tel. +1-856-520-1318
e-mail: mfray85@gmail.com

DIANA COOPER CRONE
PENNSAUKEN, NJ
Tel. +1-609-665-5647
e-mail: dc.write@gmail.com

LUIS GARCIA
MAYS LANDING, NJ
Tel. +1-202-329-6389
e-mail: luig@gwmail.gwu.edu

JUDY GAMBLE
SOMERSET, NJ
Tel. +1-732-873-5231
e-mail: judygamble@comcast.net

TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

NEW MEXICO

BETH ENSON
ARROYO SECO, NM
e-mail: wildmushroomsoup@gmail.com



NEW YORK

HEATHER BUNCH
KINGSTON, NY
Tel. +1-845-532-9373
e-mail: bunchofularoe@gmail.com

DYAMI NASON-REGAN
HIGH FALLS, NY
Tel. +1-845-594-4518
e-mail: 4dyami@gmail.com

ELLIE KRAMER
WEST HURLEY, NY
Tel. +1-845-750-2922
e-mail: elliek2@hvc.rr.com

ALYSON (ALY) HALPERT
MILLERTON, NY
Tel. +1-734-239-3641
e-mail: akhalpert@gmail.com

JOHN BUCKLEY
BUFFALO, NY
Tel. +1-716-886-0544
e-mail: love2healnow@gmail.com

ELISABETH ROSSOW
BUFFALO, NY
Tel. +1-716-903-5375
e-mail: rossowelisabeth@gmail.com

MARK KILMARTIN
CORNING, NY
Tel. +1-607-962-5582
e-mail: mkilmartin@earthlink.net

NORTH CAROLINA

ANNE MACKIE
THOMASVILLE, NC
Tel. +1-336-313-5125
e-mail: awmackie@gmail.com

GEORGE DIMOCK
GREENSBORO, NC
Tel. +1-336-210-8122
e-mail: g_dimock@uncg.edu

SUSAN LINDSAY
GREENSBORO, NC
Tel. +1-336-272-4690
e-mail: sclindsay22@gmail.com

LESLIE KAUSCH
GREENSBORO, NC
Tel. +1-336-852-4063
e-mail: singonki@gmail.com

JOHN THOMAS
CARY, NC
Tel. +1-919-460-8909
e-mail: frog.pond@mindspring.com

BEVERLY A. BRANAMAN
APEX, NC
Tel. +1-919-773-8330
e-mail: bbrnc@nc.rr.com

MARIA RUATTO
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-828-989-7055
e-mail: mariaruatto@gmail.com



DALE EVARTS
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-919-402-6275
e-mail: dale.evarts@gmail.com

ANNE CLAIRE
BROUGHTON
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-919-286-9391
e-mail: abcroughton37@yahoo.com

ANNA GRANT
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-484-326-4399
e-mail: annathegrant@gmail.com

ANGELIA JAMES
CHARLOTTE, NC
Tel. +1-704-905-2185
e-mail: adstradford2@yahoo.com

JEANNETTE HICKMAN
CHARLOTTE, NC
Tel. +1-704-726-0300
e-mail: revjeannette@hotmail.com

OHIO

HEATHER DEAN
COLUMBUS, OH
Tel. +1-614-572-6344
e-mail: copalaa2003@yahoo.com

JOE SPARKS
PERRYSBURG, OH
Tel. +1-419-345-0885
e-mail: joe.sparks@toast.net

SONDRA D. MCCURRY
EUCLID, OH
Tel. +1-216-407-7823
e-mail: smccurry@ameritech.net

JOAN DANES
BROOK PARK, OH
Tel. +1-216-961-9444
e-mail: kjdanes@nowonline.net

SARALYNNE THORESEN
CINCINNATI, OH
Tel. +1-513-542-6085
e-mail: olive@e-burwinkel.net

BOMANI MOYENDA
YELLOW SPRINGS, OH
Tel. +1-937-450-3483

OKLAHOMA

SUSAN MULLINS
GUTHRIE, OK
Tel. +1-405-821-9613
e-mail: susan.mullins1906@gmail.com

OREGON

RUTH MCNEILL
CORVALLIS, OR
Tel. +1-541-738-6950
e-mail: ruthmcn49@yahoo.com

KENNETH DEVENEY
ASHLAND, OR
Tel. +1-541-488-5506
e-mail: kenndev@yahoo.com

PENNSYLVANIA

DEWAIN BEARD
PITTSBURGH, PA
Tel. +1-412-719-9904
e-mail: dewaineb@gmail.com

ANN WILKEN
JULIAN, PA
Tel. +1-814-321-4144
e-mail: abwilken@verizon.net

KELLY JOHNSON
PORT MATILDA, PA
Tel. +1-814-280-3127
e-mail: kellyajohnson@gmail.com

CLAIRE FOREMAN
MANSFIELD, PA
Tel. +1-570-662-3218
e-mail: claireforeman@gmail.com

KIM BANISTER
BOILING SPRINGS, PA
Tel. +1-717-574-5458
e-mail: kim@banister-heishman.com

CHUCK BARONE
CARLISLE, PA
Tel. +1-717-776-4950
e-mail: csbarone@pa.net

KATHY TUNNEY
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-637-3072
e-mail: ktreds2@aol.com

PATIENCE RAGE
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-817-5667
e-mail: paciencerage@gmail.com

GINNY BOOTH
KEMPTON, PA
Tel. +1-610-756-4431
e-mail: gbooth@ptd.net

SOUTH CAROLINA

JODY USHER
ANDERSON, SC
Tel. +1-404-668-0466
e-mail: jusher@ptd.edu

MARION FARINA
MCCORMICK, SC
Tel. +1-201-207-0590
e-mail: farina39@verizon.net

TENNESSEE

KALAI MUGILAN
BRENTWOOD, TN
Tel. +1-205-243-7747
e-mail: Kalai_Mugilan@yahoo.com

CLARE BRATTEN
NASHVILLE, TN
Tel. +1-615-383-5675
e-mail: clarebratten@gmail.com

ANNE THOMAS-ABBOTT
KNOXVILLE, TN
Tel. +1-865-719-4911
e-mail: anne.of.knoxville@gmail.com

BETSY HOBKIRK
KNOXVILLE, TN
Tel. +1-865-382-6207
e-mail: betsyhobkirk@gmail.com

TEXAS

LINDA XIMENES
SAN ANTONIO, TX
Tel. +1-210-492-9401
e-mail: lindax1944@icloud.com

VERMONT

BILL KEEGAN
POST MILLS, VT
Tel. +1-802-333-9372
e-mail: bill.b.keegan@gmail.com

A. LAUREL GREEN
CHESTER, VT
Tel. +1-802-275-4646
e-mail: laurel1planet@gmail.com

STEVE CROFTER
CHESTER, VT
Tel. +1-802-275-4646
e-mail: steve.crofter@gmail.com

ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR
BRATTLEBORO, VT
Tel. +1-802-258-7612
e-mail: anne.koplinka@gmail.com

GUY WOOD
PUTNEY, VT
Tel. +1-802-579-4844
e-mail: guynvt@gmail.com

GAIL HAINES
PUTNEY, VT
Tel. +1-802-258-0369
e-mail: gail.haines.48@gmail.com

KEN FIELD
PUTNEY, VT
Tel. +1-802-387-5288
e-mail: kenfield@gmail.com

GARTH ALLEN
BURLINGTON, VT
Tel. +1-802-310-4962
e-mail: garthcallen@hotmail.com

SUSAN MUNKRES
BURLINGTON, VT
Tel. +1-802-540-0736
e-mail: susan.munkres@gmail.com

LISA BEDINGER
SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT
Tel. +1-802-865-0211
e-mail: lisa.bedinger@comcast.net

KATHY MANN
DANVILLE, VT
Tel. +1-802-684-3698
e-mail: kmmmcen@myfairpoint.net

MARILYN MCENERY
DANVILLE, VT
Tel. +1-802-684-3698
e-mail: kmmmcen@myfairpoint.net

PAMELA PARKER
E. SAINT JOHNSBURY, VT
Tel. +1-802-748-5124
e-mail: plparkervt@gmail.com

BARBARA DELZIO
GLOVER, VT
Tel. +1-802-525-3460
e-mail: barbdelzio@gmail.com

VIRGINIA

JEFFREY HINKLEY
YORKTOWN, VA
Tel. +1-757-867-7909
e-mail: polymers1@aol.com

LAURA NEWELL-FURNISS
LYNCHBURG, VA
Tel. +1-434-665-7657
e-mail: Lauranewell.furniss@gmail.com

WASHINGTON

PETER SCHOONMAKER
ISSAQUAH, WA
Tel. +1-425-392-9236
e-mail: pschoonmaker@comcast.net

LINDA BAKAN
RENTON, WA
Tel. +1-425-271-1097
e-mail: Lbakam@comcast.net

BETSY CARROLL
SEDRO WOOLLEY, WA
Tel. +1-360-299-0818
e-mail: cbetsyjo@gmail.com

GARY BRANDT
BELLINGHAM, WA
Tel. +1-360-734-0383
e-mail: gary@macy-brandt.com

HEIDI MORFORD
CLINTON, WA
Tel. +1-360-321-5206
e-mail: heidim@whidbey.com

CAROLINE WILDFLOWER
PORT TOWNSEND, WA
Tel. +1-360-379-5376
e-mail: ckwildflower@gmail.com

JUDITH-KATE FRIEDMAN
PORT TOWNSEND, WA
Tel. +1-360-643-1961
e-mail: judelings@gmail.com

JUDITH KAY
TACOMA, WA
Tel. +1-253-759-5844
e-mail: judithkay@harbornet.com

BARBARA MENNE
TACOMA, WA
Tel. +1-253-444-1395
e-mail: menneb@harbornet.com

WALES

PIP WALLER
LLANGOLLEN
DENBIGHSHIRE
Tel. +44 1978 861750
e-mail: pipsie108@gmail.com

MARIANNE JONES
MENAI BRIDGE
ANGLESEY
Tel. +44-1248-712962
e-mail: swynymor@googlemail.com

PATRICIA HUGHES
NEWTOWN, POWYS
Tel. +44-1686-625980
e-mail: patricia.hughes2010@hotmail.co.uk

STEPHEN HUGHES
NEWTOWN, POWYS
Tel. +44-1686-625980
e-mail: stebliits2010@hotmail.co.uk

KERAN SIMMONDS
LLANIDLOES, POWYS
Tel. +44-1686-411016
e-mail: keran@hotmail.com

ZAMBIA

PRECIOUS MONDE MWIYA
LUSAKA
Tel. +260-977-144977

BARBRA MALUMO
LUSAKA
Tel. +260 979478358
e-mail: bmalumo@gmail.com

ZIMBABWE

RUDO TRACY PHIRI
HARARE
Tel. +263 772 855452
e-mail: rudop9@gmail.com

PETRONELLA MUZA
CHICAGO, KWEKWE
MIDLANDS
Tel. +263-552-4283,
+263-772-755-802



RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING CONTACTS *These are persons outside the organized Areas who have expressed an interest in meeting others who might join them in getting Co-Counseling started.*

For some places, there are also people to contact if you live in a location that's not listed. (See also the box at the top of page 113 titled "How to Find RC in a Particular Geographical Location.)"

AFRICA, EAST

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
WANJIKU KIRONYO
NAIROBI
Tel. +254-724 787 115
e-mail: wanjiku@sedsmmc.org

AFRICA, SOUTHERN

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
BAFANA MATSEBULA
MBABANE, ESWATINI
Tel. +268-7-602-5295
e-mail: mngani7@gmail.com

AFRICA, WEST

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
CHIOMA OKONKWO
LAGOS
Tel. +234-8023-108-536
e-mail: chioks@yahoo.com

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES
NICOLA OSSHER
TWEEDS HEAD WEST, NSW
Tel. +61 432 724 661
e-mail: nicolossoher@gmail.com

NORTHERN TERRITORY

HENRY HARPER
RAPID CREEK, NT
Tel. +61-8-8948-2220
e-mail: brownandharper@bigpond.com

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PAM RUMBLE
DENMARK, WA
Tel. +61-8-9848-2015

VICTORIA OUTSIDE MELBOURNE

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
KAREN ROSSAUER
e-mail: krossauer@westnet.com.au

NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES & QUEENSLAND

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
JO PERRY
e-mail: jp44213@gmail.com

SOUTH & CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
CATHY PICONE
HOVE, SA
Tel. +61-8-8296-4357
e-mail: cpicone@westnet.com.au



BAHRAIN, KINGDOM OF

RAMAKRISHNA IYER
MANAMA
Tel. +973-1729-1583 (h),
+973-1725-5209 (w),
+973-3947-0153 (mobile)
e-mail: uramiyer@hotmail.com

BELGIUM

KRIS VAN DAELE
ANTWERPEN (BORGERHOUT)
Tel. +32-496-10 73 91
e-mail: krisvandaele1971@gmail.com

CANADA

MANITOBA
CATHY-JANE GREEN
BRANDON, MB
Tel. +1-204-727-8343
e-mail: cathyjane@yahoo.com

BRITISH COLUMBIA INTERIOR & ALBERTA

PHYLLIS BEARDSLEY
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
Tel. +1-604-970-1584
e-mail: rcphyllis@gmail.com

COSTA RICA

GUANACASTE
KEITH LEHRER
PLAYA SAMARA
GUANACASTE
Tel. +506-301-3867
e-mail: keithkiddo@yahoo.com

DENMARK

SJAELLAND
LEIF SINIUS NIELSEN
RØDVIK STEVNS
Tel. +45-4158-3335
e-mail: leif.sinius@leneoleif.dk

ARNE STENTOFT
KIRKE HYLLENGE
Tel. +45-3672-6616
e-mail: arnestentoft@gmail.com

MARIA GJERULLF
SCHMIDT
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
KOLDING
Tel. +506-4523316525
e-mail: mariaschmidt@gmail.com

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

DEBORAH WILSON
SANTO DOMINGO
Tel. +1-829-606-8416
e-mail: deborahlynnwilson@yahoo.com

ENGLAND

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER
HELEN LOWE
SHEFFIELD
Tel. +44-114-2838702
e-mail: helenlowe935@btinternet.com

EAST OF ENGLAND

JEREMY THORNTON
NORWICH, NORFOLK
Tel. +44-1603-484924
e-mail: rejemy63@hotmail.com

JACKY CLARKE
PARTS OF SURREY & LONDON WEST NOT LISTED
Tel. +44-7961354344
e-mail: jackyclarke@btinternet.com

HELEN BOURNE
PARTS OF CORNWALL & SOUTH WEST LONDON NOT LISTED
e-mail: helen.bourne@btinternet.com

GERMANY

MARA WOLDT
COPPENBRUGGE
Tel. +49-5156-785252
e-mail: post@mara-woldt.de

GUATEMALA

COLBY SINGLETON
QUEZALTENANGO
Tel. +502-3205-2583
e-mail: singleton.colby@gmail.com

ICELAND

DOROTHEA LORENZ-
DOTTIR
REYKJAVIK
Tel. +354-5510334
e-mail: lorenzdottir@gmail.com

INDIA

TAMILNADU
K. SOUNDAR RAJAN
Tel. +91-4542-225202
e-mail: soundar_pmk@yahoo.co.in

UTTARAKHAND

SAVITRI NARAYANAN
DEHRADUN
UTTARAKHAND
Tel. +91-9897053073
e-mail: savitrinn@gmail.com

WEST BENGAL

DIPAK BASU
TAKI, WEST BENGAL
Tel. +91-3217-247584

IRELAND, NORTHERN

PASCAL MCCULLA
BELFAST
Tel. +44-28-90813444
e-mail: pascalmculla@googlemail.com

JAPAN

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
WAKO ONO
HOKKAIDO
Tel. +81-11-312-9687
e-mail: wkono569@gmail.com

LATVIA

KRISTINE MAKA
SALDUS RAJ.,
SALDUS RAJ.
Tel. +371-26471-919
e-mail: kristine.maka@gmail.com

MADAGASCAR

MME RAZANASETA
JOSEPHINE
ANTANANARIVO
e-mail: razanaseta@yahoo.fr

MALAYSIA

YEAP EIT KUENG
PETALING JAYA
Tel. +60-16-332-0857
e-mail: ekyeap@gmail.com

MAURITIUS

(INDIAN OCEAN)
GISÈLE LUXIMAN-VARDIN
VACOAS
Tel. +230-696-4074
e-mail: rengarani@yahoo.co.uk

MONGOLIA

CH. SOSORMAA
CHINGELTEI DISTRICT
ULAANBAATAR
Tel. +976-1-310991
e-mail: mongolcav@magicnet.mn

NEPAL

BIJAYA SAINJU
KATMANDU
Tel. +977-1-277033
e-mail: bijaya.sainju@gmail.com

PHILIPPINES

VINCENT LEUNG
QUEZON CITY
Tel. +63-920-954-3424
e-mail: vpleung70@yahoo.com

MELANIE CATALAN
JIMENEZ
LAS PINAS CITY
Tel. +971-562598809,
+971-508724726
e-mail: melanie010700@gmail.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

UDMURTIA
GUZEL GILMANOVA
LDZEVSK, UDMURTIA
Tel. +3412-52-12-18

SAUDI ARABIA, KINGDOM OF

GERALDINE GORMAN
DHARHAN
e-mail: ggorman@hotmail.com

SPAIN

GALICIA
MARIA ISABEL FLORES
SEIJAS
MOANA, PONTEVEDRA
Tel. +34-986-313996
e-mail: ifdm61@gmail.com

DAVID MIDDLETON
MOANA, PONTEVEDRA
Tel. +34-986-313996

SWEDEN

CAROLYN JOHANSON
JÖNKÖPING
Tel. +46-36-176590

THAILAND

GEOFFREY H. WHEELER
UDON THANI
Tel. +66 81 2611715
e-mail: geoffrey@cvbt-web.org

BENGT METTINGER
CHIANG MAI,
CHIANG MAI
Tel. +66-86-188-1280
e-mail: bamswed@hotmail.com

TURKEY

BILGE SELUK
USKUDAR - ISTANBUL
Tel. +90-216-343 94 42
e-mail: blgsel@hotmail.com

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ALABAMA
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
ELENA MURATORI
Tel. +1-305-453-1835
e-mail: seamaid55@yahoo.com

ALASKA

SARAH TRAINOR
FAIRBANKS, AK
Tel. +1-907-978-2237
e-mail: sarah.fleisher@gmail.com

LEONA SANTIAGO
JUNEAU, AK
Tel. +1-907-364-2682
e-mail: lsantiago@cfrc.org

GEORGE PARTLOW
DOUGLAS, AK
Tel. +1-928-581-8146
e-mail: pricerbumanto@hotmail.com

MERLE NANCY HAWKINS
KETCHIKAN, AK
Tel. +1-907-225-2538

ARKANSAS

ALMA BURT
DUMAS, AR
Tel. +1-870-382-6585
e-mail: almburt@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

MYCHAELE DE LA TORRE
SIMI VALLEY, CA
Tel. +1-805-526-5502

SUSAN HEDGPETH
PLEASANT HILL, CA
Tel. +1-925-363-5779
e-mail: hedgpeth@berkeley.edu

DAVORA TETENS
PARTS OF NORTH COAST
CALIFORNIA NOT LISTED
Tel. +1-917-518-7456
e-mail: davoratetens@gmail.com

JENNIFER BERRY
PARTS OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA NOT LISTED
Tel. +1-310-750-5930
e-mail: jenniferberry1@mac.com

COLORADO

BOB LENK
FORT COLLINS, CO
Tel. +1-970-430-5365
e-mail: boblenk@frii.com

ANNA ROYER
SALIDA, CO
Tel. +1-970-903-4174

CONNECTICUT

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
STACEY LEEDS
Tel. +1-860-974-1043
e-mail: leedspechie@charter.net.com

FLORIDA

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
ELENA MURATORI
Tel. +1-305-453-1835
e-mail: seamaid55@yahoo.com

RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING CONTACTS

GEORGIA

OUTSIDE OF ATLANTA
ELENA MURATORI
Tel. +1-305-453-1835
e-mail: seamaid55@
yahoo.com



IDAHO

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
SHELLEY MACY
Tel. +1-360-961-6170
e-mail: shelley@
macy-brandt.com

ILLINOIS

FRED LAMB
URBANA, IL
Tel. +1-217-840-3909
e-mail: fklamb@gmail.com

INDIANA

NANCY MARIE
ROBERTSON
INDIANAPOLIS, IN
Tel. +1-317-417-2592
e-mail: Herstorian.Grrl@
gmail.com

IOWA

CLAIRE WOFFORD
IOWA CITY, IA
Tel. +1-641-233-7633
e-mail: M.claire.wofford@
gmail.com

IRVING TREADWAY
WEST BRANCH, IA
Tel. +1-319-643-7623



KENTUCKY

CAROL LAMM
BEREA, KY
Tel. +1-859-986-9256
e-mail: carol@klingbeils.us

MAINE

BOBBIE GOLDMAN
MOUNT DESERT, ME
Tel. +1-978-604-4953
e-mail: bobbieg082@
gmail.com



MICHIGAN

MARY MYERS
HUNTINGTON WOODS, MI
Tel. +1-248-545-9080
e-mail: marymy@aol.com

MONTANA

LAURIE TALCOTT
LIVINGSTON, MT
Tel. +1-831-234-4237
e-mail: laurietalcott@
sbcglobal.net

SHELLEY MACY
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
Tel. +1-360-961-6170
e-mail: shelley@
macy-brandt.com

NEVADA

POLLY PEACOCK
RENO, NV
Tel. +1-775-329-0128



NEW HAMPSHIRE

LOTUS LIEN
MANCHESTER, NH
Tel. +1-603-275-9988
e-mail: lien@hotmail.com

CHRISTINE GARR-MAY
LUKE
LACONIA, NH
Tel. +1-401-742-5361
e-mail: christinegluke@
gmail.com

NEW YORK

PHUNG PHAM
PLATTSBURGH, NY
Tel. +1-617-383-4080
e-mail: phungis@gmail.com

TAM KISTLER
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
UPSTATE NEW YORK
Tel. +1-518-331-6611
e-mail: tamkistler3@
gmail.com



NORTH CAROLINA

ELIZABETH MACDONALD
ORIENTAL, NC
Tel. +1-252-249-3520
e-mail: elizm65@gmail.com

COLLEEN HARGREAVES
HICKORY, NC
Tel. +1-828-294-6939
e-mail: colleen_hargreaves1@
hotmail.com

SADIE KNEIDEL
BURNSVILLE, NC
Tel. +1-336-392-0122
e-mail: sadie.kneidel@
gmail.com

ELAINE LONG
PISGAH FOREST, NC
Tel. +1-828-862-8932
e-mail: elaineblong@
yahoo.com

DALE EVARTS
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
Tel. +1-919-402-6275
e-mail: dale.evarts@
gmail.com



OHIO

JOHN EDGERTON
AKRON, OH
Tel. +1-330-696-0734
e-mail: jwe@uakron.edu

ANNIE GERIG
WOOSTER, OH
Tel. +1-330-262-1466
e-mail: bstyer@sssnet.com

VELMA BARBER
DAYTON, OH
Tel. +1-937-258-8126
e-mail: vlb137@aol.com

OREGON

KERRY JOYCE
COOS BAY, OR
Tel. +1-541-297-6938
e-mail: kerry.joyce@gmail.com



KATHLEEN HARRINGTON
BEND, OR
Tel. +1-541-815-8522
e-mail: kmharrington@
hotmail.com

RACHEL NOBLE
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
e-mail: rocnoble@msn.com

PENNSYLVANIA

BETH GRAYBILL
LANCASTER, PA
Tel. +1-717-945-7575
e-mail: bethgraybill@
gmail.com



SOUTH CAROLINA

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
DALE EVARTS
Tel. +1-919-402-6275
e-mail: dale.evarts@
gmail.com

TENNESSEE

REGINA MORTON
MEMPHIS, TN
Tel. +1-901-604-8006
e-mail: corin2518@
msn.com



REBECCA KILMER
SPARTA, TN
Tel. +1-501-372-6633
e-mail: rebkilmer@
gmail.com

DALE EVARTS
ALL UNLISTED PARTS
Tel. +1-919-402-6275
e-mail: dale.evarts@
gmail.com

TEXAS

NORI-LYNN TRUSCOTT
BULVERDE, TX
Tel. +1-830-438-3193

UTAH

STEFFANI RAFF
PLEASANT GROVE, UT
Tel. +1-801-796-6110
e-mail: steffaniraff@
gmail.com



CATHY HASKINS
SALT LAKE CITY, UT
Tel. +1-801-583-3515
e-mail: cathy.haskins@
gmail.com

VIRGINIA

POLLY HIESER
CHECK, VA
Tel. +1-540-651-3226

WASHINGTON

ALL UNLISTED PARTS
& NOT KING COUNTY
SHELLEY MACY
BELLINGHAM, WA
Tel. +1-360-961-6170
e-mail: shelley@
macy-brandt.com

WYOMING

CHRIS ANDERSON-
SPRECHER
LARAMIE, WY
Tel. +1-307-745-8536
e-mail: chrisas1@hotmail.com

LISA HILLMER
LANDER, WY
Tel. +1-307-332-5976
e-mail: netofgems@
rocketmail.com

WALES

JANET EDWARDS
OSWESTRY
Tel. +44-1691-780829
e-mail: j_edwards_eagle@
yahoo.co.uk

ZAMBIA

CHILIMBA HAMAVHWA
LUSAKA
Tel. +260-283-483,
+260-1-283-977,
+260-96-758-193 (cell)



HAWAII, USA • SHANI FLETCHER

WORKSHOPS

- wheelchair accessible ✕ not wheelchair accessible ◇ no information supplied by organizer

This list of weekend workshops includes only some of the Regional and International RC workshops being held all over the world. We list all announcements we receive from workshop organizers, workshop leaders, and local RC newsletters, to the extent we have space and are sent sufficient information. Because we do not have enough staff to solicit this information, we ask that workshop organizers e-mail workshop information (dates, place, accessibility, leader, organizer and how to contact organizer, title of workshop, and who the workshop is for) to ircc@rc.org.

Attendance at any of these workshops requires the written approval of your Area or Regional Reference Person or the International Reference Person. For more information, contact the workshop organizer.

A REMINDER TO ALL WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS: (1) attempt to find workshop sites that are wheelchair accessible (note: "partially accessible" means not accessible), and (2) send information about accessibility to *Present Time*, along with other workshop information.

THE NEXT TWO TO FOUR MONTHS OF WORKSHOPS MAY BE CANCELLED, RESCHEDULED, OR HELD VIA ZOOM, DEPENDING ON CONDITIONS.

DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
July 11-12/20 ZOOM		Julian Weissglass	Dipti Baranwal. Tel. +1-323-445-5550, write, dipti@gmail.com	Wide World Change/Taller sobre el Cambio Mundial: Strengthening Relationships & Taking Leadership During Times of Crises, for Latin America & California, USA
July 14-16/20 ZOOM		◇ Tim Jackins & Barbara Love		Wygelian Leaders, BLCD (Black Liberation & Community Development)
July 16-20/20 ZOOM		◇ Barbara Love		International BLCD (Black Liberation & Community Development)
July 17-19/20 ZOOM	Newton, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Jennifer Wexler	Gladys Maged, gladysmaged@gmail.com	Ending White Racism, for Eastern Massachusetts & Rhode Island, USA
July 18/20 ZOOM	9 am to 9 pm PDT Seattle time	Jan Yoshiwara	Avery Osajima, averykiyo@gmail.com	People of the Global Majority & Indigenous Allies to African Heritage People
July 18/20 ZOOM	9 am to 9 pm PDT Seattle time	Dvora Slavin	Annette Sacksteder, amsacksteder@gmail.com	Ending White Racism Targeting African Heritage People
July 31- August 2/20 ZOOM	Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA	◇ Teresa Enrico	Sparky Griego, sgriego@rocketmail.com	Women's Liberation with an Emphasis on Physical Power & Health
July 31- August 2/20 ZOOM	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Anne Piche	Joan MacKenzie, joanmackrc@gmail.com	Sunrise Center East Workshop, for Eastern & Mid North America
July 31- August 4/20 ZOOM	Amherst, Massachusetts, USA	● Russ Vernon-Jones	Eileen Nemzer. Tel. +1-647-554-3618, nemzer@gmail.com	Educational Change in Our Current Era
August 7-9/20 ZOOM	near Asheville, North Carolina, USA	◇ Rudy Nickens	Dale Everts. Tel. +1-919-402-6275, dale.evarts@gmail.com	Men's Liberation, for Southern USA
August 9/20 ZOOM		Dvora Slavin & Diane Shisk	Cameron Hubbe, human@nu-world.com	White People Eliminating Racism in the Movement to End the Climate Emergency
August 14-16/20 ZOOM	Oregon, USA	◇ Marya Axner	Judi Soloway, jchazanow@yahoo.com	Parents, for Oregon, USA
August 21-23/20 ZOOM	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Marcie Rendon	Mary Ruth Gross, maryruthgross@gmail.com	Native American Perspectives on Living With the Earth, for People of the Global Majority & Indigenous People, for North America
August 27-30/20 ZOOM	outside of St. Louis, Missouri, USA	◇ Gwen Brown & Tim Jackins	Kathy Martino. Tel. +1-718-627-6071, kathymartino522@gmail.com	Raised Poor Leaders, for North America
September 4-6/20 ZOOM	Los Angeles, California, USA	◇ Cherie Brown & Diane Shisk	Albert Fields, albertfields@mac.com	Jews & the Climate Emergency, for West Coast North America
September 10-13/20 ZOOM	East Coast USA	◇ Diane Balsler & Ayana Morse assisted by Tokumbo Bodunde	Beth Edmonds, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Women & Our Reproductive Lives: For Women 16-50 (deciding whether or not to raise children, etc.), for North America
October 1-4/20	Denmark	◇ Tim Jackins	Trine Maribo Carstensen. Tel. +45-35-35-79-86, trinmc@msn.com	Taking RC Actively into the World & Climate Change, for Europe
October 2-4/20	Chicago, Illinois, USA	◇ Seán Ruth	Jeeyun Lee. Tel. +1-773-805-4303, jeeyun.lee@gmail.com	Ending Class Oppression, for People of the Global Majority who are Raised or Currently Middle Class, for North America
October 9-11/20	Vicenza, Italy	✕ Emmy Rainwalker	Gianna Beltrame, giabeltrame@gmail.com	Community Building & Wide World Change, for Italians in Italy & Abroad
October 9-12/20	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Dan Nickerson	Jeannine Giguere-Gagnon. Tel. +1-401-439-1673, jgigueregagnon@gmail.com	Direct Production Workers
October 22-25/20	Washington, DC, USA	◇ Barbara Love & Cherie Brown	Black Gentiles: Rachel Noble. Tel. +1-971-212-5768, rocnoble@msn.com Jews: Adley Gartenstein. Tel. +1-347-464-9040, adleyrc@gmail.com	Black Gentiles & Jews, International
October 28- November 1/20	Lunteren, the Netherlands	◇ Tim Jackins	Goof Buijs, bunic@ziggo.nl	Men Leaders, for Europe
November 6-8/20	New York, USA	◇ Azi Khalili & Dvora Slavin	Barbara Deck. Tel. +1-617-312-6515, badeck1@gmail.com	Allies to Muslims

continued . . .

WORKSHOPS

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DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
November 6-8/20	Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA	◇ Steve Bromer	Justina Trott, drjt505@gmail.com	Physicians
November 13-15/20	Elmer, New Jersey, USA (near Philadelphia)	◇ Jo Saunders	Hanne Weedon, hhweedon67@gmail.com	Owning Class, for East Coast USA/Canada/Caribbean
November 26-29/20	Cheshunt, Herts, England	• Dvora Slavin	Christine Sheppard. Tel. +44 (0) 1525 374378, christinesheppard@icloud.com	Eliminating White Racism, for Cornwall, England, Scotland, & Wales
December 4-6/20	Sydney, Australia	◇ Cherie Brown & Jo Perry	Lyndall Katz, lyndalk@gmail.com (for Jews)	Jews & Allies
December 4-6/20	Maryland, USA	◇ Ellie Putnam	Uta Allers, uta.allers@gmail.com	Elders, for Washington, DC, Maryland, & Virginia, USA
December 4-6/20	Northern California, USA	◇ Emily Feinstein	Beth Krebs. Tel. +1-718-415-0017, beth.krebs@gmail.com	Artist Liberation & Reclaiming Creativity, for Northern California, USA
December 4-6/20	Maine or New Hampshire, USA	◇ Jenny Sazama	Jerry Yoder. Tel. +1-207-233-5191, jerryyoder@mac.com	Allies to Young People, for Quebec & New Brunswick, Canada & Maine, New Hampshire, & Vermont, USA
December 7-9/20	Southwest USA	◇ Emily Feinstein	Gene Galazan, insiderartist@gmail.com	Artist Liberation, for Southwest USA
January 7-10/21	To be announced	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Aya Ansar." Tel. +1-215-680-7871, aya.ansar.rc@gmail.com	LGBTQ Raised Female
January 15-18/21	Gresham, Oregon, USA	◇ Tim Jackins	Dvora Slavin, dvoraslavin@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for West Coast North America
January 22-24/21	Washington, DC, USA	◇ Cherie Brown & Diane Shisk	Alan Epstein. Tel. +1-617-966-7674, ade26g@gmail.com	Jews & the Climate Emergency, for East Coast North America
February 5-7/21	Central/Eastern USA	◇ Seán Ruth & Jo Saunders	Leslie Kausch. Tel. 1+336-509-3680, singonki@gmail.com	USer Identity, for Central & Eastern USA
February 12-14/21	Western USA	◇ Seán Ruth & Jo Saunders	Mary Ruth Gross. Tel. +1-510-333-3347, maryruthgross@gmail.com	USer Identity, for Western USA
February 12-15/21	Sydney, Australia	◇ Tim Jackins	Lyndall Katz, lyndalk@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for Australia
February 18-21/21	Tokyo, Japan	◇ Tim Jackins	Wako Ono, wako569@yahoo.co.jp	Pre-World Conference for East Asia
March 11-14/21	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc" assisted by "David Nijinsky" & "Nina Bird"	"Rivkah Odeda," rivkah.odeda@gmail.com	LGBTQ for 35 & Under
March 12-14/21	New York City, New York, USA	◇ Cherie Brown	Millie Waldman, millieaw@aol.com	Jewish Liberation, for the Regions of K Webser & Mike Ishii
March 18-21/21	East Coast USA	◇ Chuck Esser & Fela Barclift	Tamara Damon, tkdemon@me.com	Family Workers Conference, for East Coast North American
March 18-21/21	Denmark	◇ Joan Karp	Contact Joan Karp, j-karp@comcast.net	Leading Early Sexual Memories Work, International
March 18-21/21	West Coast USA	◇ Marya Axner	Judi Soloway, jchazanow@yahoo.com	Parents & Climate Change, for West Coast North America
March 18-21/21	Mexico City, Mexico	◇ Tim Jackins	Iliria Hernandez Unzueta, i_unzueta@hotmail.com	Pre-World Conference for Latin America
April 2-5/21	Nairobi, Kenya	◇ Tim Jackins	Wanjiku Kironyo, rc@sedsmmc.org	Pre-World Conference for Africa
April 8-11/21	Pune, India	◇ Tim Jackins	Niti Dandekar, dandekarniti@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for South Asia
April 8-11/21	East Coast USA (maybe Silver Spring, Maryland)	◇ Diane Balsler	Beth Edmonds, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for East Coast North America
April 15-18/21	West Coast North America	◇ Diane Balsler assisted by Micaela Morse	Mary Ruth Gross. Tel. +1-510-333-3347, maryruthgross@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for West Coast North America
April 16-18/21	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	• Eric Toensmeier, Irene Shen, & Diane Shisk	Russ Vernon-Jones. Tel. +1-413-687-4080, russvj@gmail.com	Climate Science & Policy, for North America
April 22-25/21	St. Louis, Missouri, USA	◇ Tim Jackins	Alysia Tate, alytate@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for Central/Midwest/South North America
April 30-May 1/21	Los Angeles, California, USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Emma Goldman," emmagoldmanrc@gmail.com	LGBTQ Open, for West Coast North America
May 7-10/21	Sweden	◇ Tim Jackins	Soren Holm, soren@sorenholm.se	Pre-World Conference for Northern/Western Europe
May 13-16/21	Warsaw, Poland	◇ Tim Jackins	Jacek Strzemieczny, jacek.strzemieczny@ceo.org.pl	Pre-World Conference for Eastern/Southern/ Central Europe & the Middle East
May 14-16/21	East Coast USA	◇ Marya Axner	Jerry Yoder. Tel. +1-207-233-5191, jerryyoder@mac.com	Parents & Climate Change, for East Coast North America
June 4-6/21	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Seán Ruth	Sarah Christensen, schristensen60@hotmail.com	Ending Classism for Middle-Class People, for people currently & raised middle class, for Northwest USA & Western Canada
June 10-13/21	Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA (near Philadelphia)	◇ Tim Jackins	Beth Edmonds, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for East Coast North America
June 17-20/21	Midwest/South North America	◇ Alysia Tate	LG Shanklin-Flowers. Tel. +1-414-933-0465, lginreachrc@aol.com	BLCD, for Midwest/South North America
July 15-18/21	East Coast North America	◇ Fela Barclift		BLCD, for East Coast North America
July 16-18/21	East Coast North America	◇ Teresa Enrico & Dvora Slavin	Tresa Elquera. Tel. +1-718-857-9193, tresatres@gmail.com	Jewish Family Workshop, for East Coast North America
July 22-25/21	West Coast North America	◇ Cliff Jones		BLCD, for West Coast North America
August 10-15/21	Location to be announced	◇ Tim Jackins		World Conference

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Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

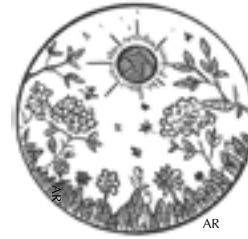
Re-evaluation Counseling theory provides a model of what a human being can be like in the area of his or her interaction with other human beings and his or her environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured as the result of accumulated distress experiences (of fear, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, and so on), which begin early in our lives.

Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, yawning, talking). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," and so on) who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself.

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for his or her own interests and the interests of others and more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

In recovering and using the natural discharge process, two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages, and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks and discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better and better.

For more information, you can go to the website <www.reevaluationcounseling.org>.



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