



# TALKING ABOUT CLIMATE

- A TOOLKIT





Most people support protecting nature. Reports show that a majority of people in the UK believe in (82.7%) and are concerned (79%) about climate change (Statista, 2024)<sup>1</sup>. Data from a global survey reveals that 89% of 130,000 people across 125 countries believe their governments should be more ambitious in their climate efforts (The Guardian, 2025)<sup>2</sup>. More importantly, it points to a ‘silent majority’ who underestimate collective concerns for the climate crisis.



Climate language is not always well understood. The terms that are used to describe environmental breakdown, targets, and policies can unintentionally distance rather than engage us. The skill of communicating climate with greater clarity, urgency, and empathy is one that we need to spend time nurturing. This toolkit is designed to help you have more strategic conversations on climate that bring us closer to realising the solutions we need at all levels of society.

There is more common ground to build on than we might think. But given this persistent gap in public perceptions and the wider disconnect between the reality of the climate emergency and the lives we currently lead, support can manifest as hopelessness, despair, and cognitive dissonance where we feel we aren’t able to choose differently or do more.

<sup>1</sup>Statista. (2024, November 22). Public opinion on climate change in the UK - statistics & facts. Retrieved from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/topics/12956/public-opinion-on-climate-change-in-the-uk/#topicOverview>

<sup>2</sup>The Guardian. (2025, April 22). *Activate climate's 'silent majority' to supercharge action, experts say*. Retrieved from The 89% Project: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/apr/22/activate-climate-silent-majority-support-supercharge-action>

# Framing Climate Effectively



Framing refers to ‘the choices we make in what we say and how we say it... when we decide what to emphasize, how to explain, which metaphors to use, which values to center, and even what to leave unsaid’ (FrameWorks, 2025)<sup>3</sup>. The stories we tell matter. The way information is presented to us can determine how we feel, relate to the issue at hand, and in turn whether or how willing we are to support actions or devote time and resources to a particular cause.

In order to build movements that can deliver justice and be sustained, we have to be able to convert our beliefs of what we understand to be real and important into tangible change. This means being able to unpack and work through conversations that spiral into fatalism, apathy, distress, or defensiveness – all of which delay rather than motivate action.



<sup>3</sup> FrameWorks. (2025, March 22). Framing Fundamentals: What is Framing? Retrieved from FrameWorks Institute: <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/framing-fundamentals/>



**“Humans are  
inherently greedy  
and selfish.”**

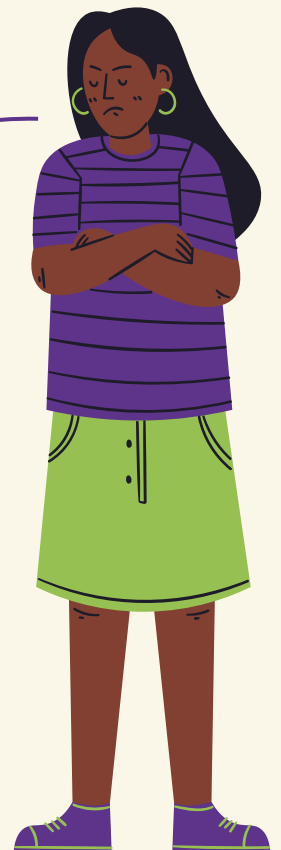


**“We’re already  
doomed, it’s too late to  
do anything.”**

**“Our systems are too big  
and too powerful to  
change.”**



**“What about other people  
and other countries?”**



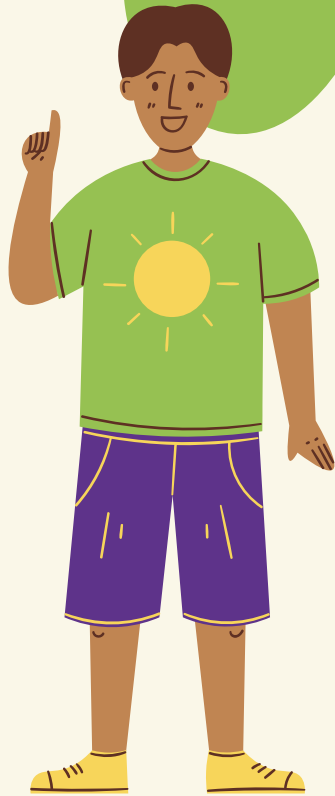
**“What I do won’t  
make a difference.”**





**Instead, we can shift the debate towards more constructive frames that emphasise:**

- Change is possible
- The climate and ecological crisis is not inevitable
- Our efforts however big or small are not in vain
- We can be gentle with people but hard on systems



**“We need solutions at every level of society, We don’t need to work alone.”**

**“Measures taking us towards just, sustainable societies are already happening. We just need to push harder.”**



**“People have always come together to care and provide for one another in hard times. The climate crisis is no different. We need each other.”**



**“There is enough for everyone if we (re)distribute power and resources more fairly.”**



The real potential of climate justice comes from communities holding government, corporations, and polluting industries accountable. There is a role to play for everyone in doing so. Climate action and activism is incredibly varied and there is no single way of being an environmentalist. We need better stories and media portrayals that underscore the collective power of ordinary people showing up in ways they can.

# A Shared Responsibility



## ‘Confessions of a Climate Activist:

Why we need millions of imperfect activists’:  
‘We don’t often discuss the personal sacrifices, challenges and compromises that come with being a youth activist; the fact that you’re simultaneously trying to solve these hugely overwhelming problems, and being scrutinised, while stumbling your way into adulthood. We need to create spaces within activism where it’s ok to make mistakes, and grow from them’  
(Hogan, 2024)<sup>4</sup>.

## ‘Do Away with the Do-Gooder Trope’:

The fossil fuel industry benefit from us being ‘distracted by our own individual lifestyles, wondering which kind of milk is less evil, rather than hold[ing] corporations accountable through collective action’  
(Good Energy, 2025)<sup>5</sup>.



<sup>4</sup>Hogan, C. (2024, March 4). Why we need millions of imperfect activists. Retrieved from Greenhouse: [https://greenhouse.agency/blog/why-we-need-imperfect-activists/?#gf\\_2](https://greenhouse.agency/blog/why-we-need-imperfect-activists/?#gf_2)

<sup>5</sup>Good Energy. (2025, March 27). *Climate Heroes Ain't Saints*. Retrieved from Good Energy Stories: <https://www.goodenergystories.com/playbook/climate-heroes-aint-saints>

# A Matter of Care



Climate action can allow us to create a more progressive society centred around care – care for our loved ones, our wider communities, and the environment which we are a living part of. When we invest in care, we create the conditions for healthier communities, stronger democracies, and a front with which to resist movements based on indifference, hatred, and exclusion. Collective care is an antidote to the harms and injustices we continue to experience and bear witness to.

‘[C]areless communities focus on investing in policing and surveillance rather than in social provisions to promote human flourishing’ (The Care Collective, 2020)<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup>The Care Collective. (2020). The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence. London: Verso.

## Mutual Aid

During the Covid-19 pandemic, over 4000 mutual aid groups made up of local residents organised at speed to deliver food and other essential supplies to neighbours who were vulnerable, self-isolating, and under additional stress. The support provided by these groups was critical given the closure of food banks, community centres, and community cafes that left many without their normal safety net (Zakharov, 2025)<sup>7</sup>. However, as much as mutual aid signals to the personal good will and generosity of others, it is a lesson to invest in our wider social infrastructure



**Ultimately, examples such as mutual aid have emerged out of a landscape of collapsing health and social care infrastructures, hostile environments, and ongoing welfare retrenchment. Cuts to public services have created widespread precarity and hardship, with a disproportionate impact on already vulnerable, racialised, and marginalised communities.**

‘Recognising our needs both to give and to receive care not only provides us with a sense of our common humanity, but enables us to confront our shared fears of human frailty, rather than project them onto those we label as ‘dependent’ (The Care Collective, 2020)<sup>8</sup>.



<sup>7</sup>Zakharov, V. (2025, April 14). Written evidence submitted by the Joint Covid Mutual Aid groups (COV0119). Retrieved from UK Parliament: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/3672/pdf/>

<sup>8</sup>The Care Collective. (2020). The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence. London: Verso.



Political decisions and social norms to favour the traditional family unit, featuring care work that is largely gendered and unpaid, and privatised sources of care, increasingly so in housing, health care, and wellness industries, have left us more deprived and anxiety ridden as a society. Our existing economic system is failing to value and correctly resource the work of vital care. Care that pertains to our physical and mental health, education, work opportunities, our shared environment, and more.



## Restoring Trust

The climate crisis as an innately human story of how we can come together, share what we have equitably, and lean into the communities that keep us safe. It is important to focus on coalition building. Our causes are not in competition with one another but can be tackled together to strengthen our movements towards a more progressive society. We need the full spectrum of wisdom and lived experience, particularly coming from frontline communities.

Climate action is not only about restoring nature. It is also about restoring faith in community, collective care, and restoring trust and accountability in our political institutions. Protecting and restoring nature expands our choices, freedoms, and abilities to live well. We need to expand the use of tools such as Citizens' Assemblies to secure the political ambition that is needed to deliver a just transition. Our political systems are not only a place of reckoning but a process to reclaim power in our own communities so that we are not deferring to political actors as the sole agents of change.

## Citizens' Assemblies – A deliberative tool for building trust, consensus, and engagement

Citizens' Assemblies mobilise supported, structured, and informed public debates to build a public mandate for action and influence subsequent policies. They involve a selection of people brought together through lottery to represent the wider public. They have been held over issues such as health and social care, assisted dying, hate crime, air quality, Covid recovery, and Brexit. In 2019, a Citizens' Assembly was called to consider public perceptions and preferences around tackling climate change:

‘Climate Assembly UK brought together people from all walks of life to discuss how the UK can reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. At the assembly, participants learnt about climate change and how the UK can address it, took time to discuss this with one another, and then made recommendations about what should happen’(Climate Assembly UK, 2025)<sup>9</sup>.



<sup>9</sup>Climate Assembly UK. (2025, 03 24). About. Retrieved from Climate Assembly UK: The path to net zero: <https://www.climateassembly.uk/about/index.html>

# Anti-Racist Frameworks for Change

A race-conscious, decolonial, and equitable  
approach to environmentalism

**‘Even at its most benign, racism is incredibly time-consuming. Black people don’t want to be protesting for our basic rights to live and breathe. We don’t want to constantly justify our existence. Racism, injustice, and police brutality are awful on their own, but are additionally pernicious because of the brainpower and creative hours they steal from us. Consider the discoveries not made, the books not written, the ecosystems not protected, the art not created, the gardens not tended’ (Johnson, 2020)<sup>10</sup>.**



## Climate, Capitalism, and Colonialism

The climate crisis is a result of past and present political choices. Namely, the crossing of borders to invade, settle in, and exploit other lands, resources, and people. Predominantly Western colonial and neocolonial projects have put this into place through force. We see this violence maintained and morphed through the increasing securitisation of borders, policing, and prisons, as well as in structural harms where there are inequities in income, education, health, freedoms, and living standards. To understand the climate crisis in its entirety, we have to acknowledge capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, ableism, and heteronormativity as systems that drive widespread injustice, oppression, and inequity.

<sup>10</sup>Johnson, A. E. (2020, June 3). I'm a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet. Retrieved from The Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/03/im-black-climate-scientist-racism-derails-our-efforts-save-planet/>



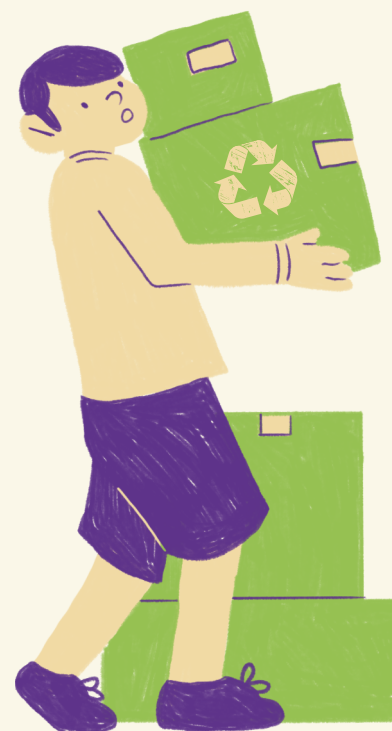
‘We are still colonized, this time through climate change, capitalist development industry, and globalization, colliding into centuries of varied and overlapping oppressions’  
(Sultana, 2023)<sup>11</sup>



**Decolonisation, beyond independence for colonised peoples and reclamation of their land, culture, and political and economic autonomy, is also about addressing the effects of colonialism on our minds, relationships, and imaginaries. Part of this work includes unlearning the norms and values that come with hierarchical power structures in societies where power is concentrated and centralised. Decolonisation is an effort to liberate us all from systems of theft, exploitation, dehumanisation, and degradation.**



‘Decolonizing climate means accounting for and reflecting on the past and present, in order to configure future pathways to remove colonial and imperial powers in all their forms’  
(Sultana, 2023)<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup>Sultana, F. (2023). Decolonizing . In R. S. Lutunatabua, Not Too Late: Changing the climate story from despair to possibility (pp. 3-10). Chicago: Haymarket Books.



Natural disasters are far from natural and inevitable. Environmental hazards such as storms, hurricanes, typhoons, heavy rains and volcanic eruptions are natural. But disasters are shaped by social and political processes and decisions. Disasters only occur when hazards are brought on communities that have been made vulnerable through the inequitable use and sharing of limited resources and who, as such, do not have the capacities to deal with climate change induced hazards. With the worst effects of climate change falling on frontline communities particularly in the Global South, tragedies that displace thousands and ravage homes and sites of cultural heritage have been unfairly normalised.

‘Ecological destruction is very much a human, moral crisis; it demands the heart and the mind to re-imagine compassion not only for the planet, but for our fellow humans as well. When frontline communities are treated as sacrifice zones, the whole planet becomes a sacrifice zone, both morally and ecologically – and this painful cycle must be stopped’ (Grudin, 2020)<sup>12</sup>.



**Capitalist and colonial values and logics of exploitation, productivity, and commodification have come to determine how we understand and relate to nature. It is a system that has upheld the predominant neoliberal economic model of extractivism whereby nature is a resource to exploit and profit from. Historically, harms towards minoritised and racialised people have gone hand in hand with harms towards the nature which they depend on.**

<sup>12</sup>Grudin, T. (2020, September 24). How White Supremacy Caused the Climate Crisis. Retrieved from Earth Island Journal: <https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/articles/entry/how-white-supremacy-caused-the-climate-crisis/>

**Spending time in nature allows us to reclaim this lost connection to nature as more than just a resource or a passive backdrop to admire at a distance. It is also a way of slowing down and reclaiming the time we truly need to rest and heal. When we extend our care towards nature, we form a connection that we all benefit from. One that is reciprocal and regenerative, build on mutual respect and benefit.**

‘The biosphere operates through constant feedback loops that regulate its health. When those loops are disrupted, the entire system is affected. The same is true for humanity. When we lose connection – to each other, to nature, to ourselves – it creates dysfunction. And when entire societies carry unprocessed trauma, that dysregulation manifests in large-scale crises’  
(Fair Planet, 2025)<sup>13</sup>.



**In England, land ownership remains vastly unequal and concentrated in the hands of the few. This means that decisions over land use – whether to restore wildlife, natural carbon sinks such as woodlands and peat soils, and improve public**

**1 per cent own 50 per cent of England (Evans, 2019). Many national parks, such as 95 per cent of the Yorkshire Dales, also fall under private ownership and a third of woodland is owned by one thousand landowners (Shrubsole, 2020)<sup>14</sup>.**

**‘Connection is the precondition of protection – we cannot redress our ecological crisis without it’ (Right to Roam, 2025)<sup>15</sup>.**

**access to nature – are drastically skewed towards the interests of a small elite. Campaigns such as Right to Roam push for greater access to nature beyond the current 8 percent of countryside that mainly sits in remote upland areas.**

<sup>13</sup>Fair Planet. (2025, February 8). Collective trauma’s contribution to climate change. Retrieved from Fair Planet: <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/collective-traumas-contribution-to-climate-change/>

<sup>14</sup>Shrubsole, G. (2020, November 2). *Who Owns England's Woods?* Retrieved from Who Owns England: <https://whoownsengland.org/2020/11/02/who-owns-englands-woods/>

<sup>15</sup>Right to Roam. (2025, April 23). About: Why we need access. Retrieved from Right to Roam: <https://www.righttoroam.org.uk/about>



**Climate work  
is anti-racist work.**

**Both look to undo unequal power structures so that we can demand and step into a fairer world. Within public and policy discourses, we still see the environment and ambitions for the economy and other spending priorities being played off against one another. For instance, recent developments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill propose a plan that would allow developers to pay into a national nature restoration fund that grants permission to sidestep environmental requirements and safeguards (The Wildlife Trusts, 2025)<sup>16</sup>. What we do to nature, we do to ourselves. We can have no viable economy or endless growth on a broken and nature-deprived planet. Instead, we have to remain steadfast in reaffirming the opportunity of climate action – bravely imagined and fully resourced – to bring about more a caring, connected, and progressive society.**

<sup>16</sup>The Wildlife Trusts. (2025, March 12). Planning and Infrastructure Bill: Legislation that must go further for nature. Retrieved from The Wildlife Trusts:<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/blog/becky-pullinger/planning-and-infrastructure-bill-legislation-must-go-further-nature>



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