

Affinity Groups - building, joining and support

An AG is a group of people who support each other to take part in nonviolent direct action (NVDA)

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Forming an Affinity Group



An Affinity Group (AG) is a group of people who support each other to take part in nonviolent direct action (NVDA).

The 'affinity' part could mean anything that unites the group - this could be where you're from, what you care about, what kind of actions you're interested in or it could just be that you like each other and want to make a difference together.

It's crucial that those people willing to risk arrest are properly supported through this experience, so not everyone in an AG needs to make that commitment.

XR is it's AGs and what we do is NVDA.

Listen to rebels talking about their AG experience: Watch the Affinity Group video here:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=279880469898569>

Here are some resources to get you and your Affinity Group started:

The AG Little Green Book:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hpwtmr1y58G3b7t23QTfS7j6ZrRdRmTJ/view>

The NVDA How To Action Guide: https://rebellion.earth/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/XR_NVDA_Guide_A5-rgb_lowres.pdf

Forming an Affinity Group

Are you a part of a Local or Community Group, and would like to organise using the Affinity Group structure to take part in action together?

We have a script just for you!
https://docs.google.com/document/d/19jSINsiZrtEOZ0zAXbw0KhL3l8A_9V5hh8aVFrc67DM/edit

This workshop is intended to be a 20-30 minute activity for groups that already have some familiarity, to organise into Affinity Groups before a specific action/Rebellion.

It can be led by anyone, and should be fluid and flexible for the relevance and needs of your group. Have fun with it! Make it your own!

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First steps in setting up your Affinity Group

- Introduce yourselves, giving a brief idea of your interests and skills, and your hopes for the group
 - Exchange contact details, and start a communications channel (ie. whatsapp group or Signal group)
 - Name your Affinity Group!
 - Sign up to AGSN database: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/affinity-group-registration>
 - Arrange the date and time you will meet next (within 2 weeks is encouraged)
 - Decide some of the group roles:
 - External Coordinator - joins AG communication channel on Mattermost, liaises with other Working Groups, receives information from AGSN
 - Internal Coordinator - organises meetings and ensures rebels feel included, engaged and supported
 - Wellbeing Support - arranges regenerative activities for the Affinity Group
- Remember: these roles should rotate and change!

Some things to consider for your first meeting

- Deeper Introductions, getting to know each other!
- Active Listening exercises
- Plan an Action / discuss and take part in a Regional / National Action
- Pair up into buddies (2 or 3 if an odd number) to provide closer support
- Participating in Trainings
 - Action Design / XR DNA / Action Wellbeing / De-escalation / Know Your Rights Legal Training

Further Reading for you and your Affinity Group:

For more information about Affinity Groups, explore the Little Green Book here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hpwtmr1y58G3b7t23QTfS7j6ZrRdRmTJ/view>

For Action Design ideas, read the Planning Effective NVDA booklet: https://rebellion.earth/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/XR_NVDA_Guide_A5-rgb_lowres.pdf

For Trainings, check out the Rebel Academy: <https://uk.rebellion.academy/> Or for more talks, trainings and workshops, tune in to ResetTV [HERE](#)

For more information, ideas and inspiration, view the Resources Page: <https://rebellion.earth/act-now/resources/>

And keep an eye out for actions and news on the XR Newsletter (join us here!), and the Facebook/Instagram/Twitter pages.

With much love and rage,

The UK AGSN Team ☐☐

AG Buddies

AG Buddies

One method for helping keep members engaged and supported is to start a buddy system in your affinity group:

- Have someone to keep track of buddies
- Not everyone will want a buddy and that's OK
- Different buddies will want to meet more or less frequently
- Buddies can be support buddies (but if your AG has formed for an action they could be action buddy)
- Confidentiality is required
- Encourage active listening
- and review buddies in AG meetings

What is an AG buddy system?

An AG support buddy system basically pairs up rebels together for emotional or general support. Each person is the other person's "buddy". Buddies can check in with each other periodically and just have a chat about how they are doing. It can prevent rebels from feeling isolated or feeling awkward about reaching out for support, and it also takes pressure of the affinity group coordinator to keep in touch with everyone in the group.

This is different from a buddy system on actions - we recommend that people have specific buddies for specific actions as attendance may vary.

Buddy Point Person

It is important to have a point person to keep track of buddies. Responsibilities will include:
Matching buddies and keeping track of pairs
Checking in on buddies periodically to see if it's going well
Reworking pairs as needed if things aren't working out

Getting Started

Using whatever communication method works best for your group, whether that's a meeting, email, or group chat, to find out if your group would like to have buddies and how they would like to match people up. Select a point person. Discuss an idea of what your members want to get out of a buddy -- of course this is just a starting point, buddies will develop a rapport that works for this over time.

Active listening for buddies is strongly encouraged. This is known to foster a regenerative culture that helps people feel listened to and in a safe space. Additionally, confidentiality between buddies is critical. Matching buddies There is no one right way to pair buddies up, but here are some

suggestions! Rotating Buddies One option is a rotating method. Randomly assign buddies for a fixed period of time and then rotate later. This can be great for new affinity groups so members can get to know each other better early on. One AG rotated every 8 weeks, and it worked well for them.

Fixed Buddies

Another method is to ask your AG what they want out of a buddy. Get a sense of how often people want to check in and what communication methods they want to use. Use this information to pair people together, or where there is an odd number, three people. This can work well if you know your members well and can use this to try and put people together who you think will get on well.

There might be some benefit to pairing members who are more able to make meeting and attend actions with members who are less able to.

Members can also try self-selecting buddies, though this may run the risk of leaving out members who are less comfortable reaching out to other members asking to be buddies.

Checking In

The point person should check in occasionally with their AG members to ask if their buddy is working for them. Is their buddy on the same page in terms of how to communicate and how often? Are they able to foster a regenerative environment with their buddy? Do they still want to have a buddy at all? Would a member who didn't want a buddy at first want one now?

If there appears to be a poor buddy match, that's perfectly fine. Just try to find a way to rematch any buddies that aren't working out. This might require turning a pair into a threesome depending on how things are working. If you find yourself struggling to figure out how to make it work, reach out to AGS and we can talk it through with you..

Example Questions for Pairs

How often do you want to catch up? Daily / Every few days / Weekly / Every couple weeks / Just as needed for support (less frequently)

How do you want to keep in contact? (Circle all that apply)

Over text (whatsApp, etc) / Phone call / Video chatting / In person

What do you want to get from your buddy?

A friendly connection at a stressful time / Only XR related things - to help you keep in the loop and answer questions / Climate things in general - to share your concerns / A supportive person to provide a 'active listening ear'

AGs Reconnect to Rebel - re-energising ideas for 2021

[To-Affinity-and-Beyond.jpg](#)

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT IS LINKED HERE:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OvRXXTermsQ6j50AHRcw7hicjCc-djSNNAAuCDtgQ/edit?usp=sharing>

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RECONNECTING

The pandemic has taken its toll and left some Affinity Groups feeling depleted and/or low on energy and direction. Check out some of these revitalizing ideas:

REACH OUT to your Affinity Group

Call or personal message Affinity Group rebels: find out how they are, check in about participation in the Rebellion, and invite them to a meeting.

Include listening circles in your meetings or longer check ins.

Have an outdoor meeting (if permitted). Choose a local beauty spot, park or just accessible local space. Have a picnic! Genuinely check in - how has everyone coped over past year? Surprise bonuses? Surprise difficulties?

Build a Buddy System within your AG:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vilwPdfNyYZXsWHqudgfYoCXWhm0xwO_aKc6c3tf6dU/edit

Meet Online:

Consider regular Affinity Group meetings for Action Planning

Zoom socials - Pub quiz, Games night, Movie watch party or Zoom cafés ...

Host a discussion on a live topic, eg. Actions Strategy Update:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RblwAZajvUJUke9RidxLRvzRrMjy5tFv/view>

(Keep in mind these zoom security tips:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZGYWcR9dmUEDZohvX4AV_WU6X25E1f-CQbHOUtwogUo/edit)

Start with our XR Story... <https://rebellion.earth/the-xr-guide-to-the-impossible/> Send out a topical article to the group, or host a fully-fledged book club - discuss together during a meeting

Watch the Heading for Extinction talk again, to remind ourselves of why we're here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Vkc4SnwY0>

Trainings Together

Check out the Rebel Academy: <https://rebellion.earth/act-now/trainings/>

Run an Affinity Cafe to gel your AG or to start planning for something bigger

Visit Reset TV here for talks and trainings to explore and discuss together:
<https://www.resettv.co.uk/>

Invite a speaker, eg. your Local Actions Mobiliser

Struggling to motivate your group?

Consider buddying with another local AG, forming a new AG, or grouping together to form a local AG Supergroup. Check out Rebel

Academy: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZGYWcR9dmUEDZohvX4AV_WU6X25E1f-CQbHOUtwogUo/edit or contact the AGSN for some of our Online AG Formation training.

Here is a 20 min Local Group and Community Group AG Formation Activity which can also be used in an AG meeting to connect and motivate: Quick AG formation here

https://docs.google.com/document/d/19jSINsiZrtEOZ0zAXbw0KhL3l8A_9V5hh8aVFrc67DM/edit

[CEE-Bill.jpg](#)

GROWING THE AG SPIDERWEB: Building connections

AGs, Supergroups and AG Councils

Supergroups and Regional Affinity Group Councils - more information here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f1wCTGxsjeaCvQOvgwsx3uM20um02g5zB6XfNNOfBxY/edit?usp=sharing>

A Supergroup is a collection of rebels, both within or without an AG who link together to work towards a specific action or rebellion or to support small AGs to take action alongside others.

Affinity Group (AG) Councils can be run regularly or when needed to support AGs across a region to

share ideas and resources, coordinate regional actions or take decisions on a regional level, usually composed of AG representatives.

An Affinity Group Council is a space to:

- Plan action ideas together
- Share action designs
- Have your voice heard and deliver real feedback
- To share stories and offer experience
- Support each other: emotionally and logistically
- Build community
- Collectively prepare for action and rebellion
- Get involved!

If you would like help setting up a Supergroup or are interested in joining your Regional AG Council and would like to be looped in, email us at xraffinitysupport@protonmail.com

AG Action Cafés

Watch out for AG CAFÉS being advertised to support rebels to form AGs for action planning for G7 and COP26

ACT NOW!

[Act-now-crowd.jpg](#)

There is nothing that knits an AG together like action! Actions are both the magnet and the glue.

Check out the UK Action Strategy Update to find out what's coming up nationally that you can get involved with

In the time of Covid-19, we have had to be more creative than ever. But this hasn't stopped us. We need a bit of imagination, awareness and understanding of how to keep everyone safe.

Gently does it... Start small, start simple.

Here are some examples which link with current themes and rebellion waves coming upg:

Mass Trespass: This Land is Our Land - 24th April and June An action for all levels of spice, suitable for families: Check out the Facebook information

<https://www.facebook.com/events/925233294887105/>

Rebellion of one - 1st May A powerful action for a single rebel plus support team happening all across the UK. 's gaining pace, with actions popping up internationally. There is so much info and training... get amongst it! Want to join or create a team?

Find information and links, Action Network form sign up and Trainings calendar in the Rebellion Of One briefing document here::

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NXvi1UXNpbkFtFrd4o90NF7ngTLDVRLknUYjA-9h1YA/edit?authuser=0>

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Climate and Ecological Emergencies Bill -

The 2nd anniversary of the UK Parliament declaring a climate and ecological emergency is 1st May. Join Rebellion of One or what will you plan to mark this date?

Outreach - encourage people to write to their MPs - help here: <https://digitalrebellion.uk/cee-bill>

Money Rebellion Take action against bank investment in dirty industry.

[Bank-image.jpg](#)

Ideas and briefings here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m73TW6vf-TnnytWFIKZEI53trKLSnjHRoXLUzYISeE/edit>

Kill The Bill

Watch out for demonstrations near you. KillTheBill information

Be a Truth Teller

Whistleblow within companies and target industries: TRUTHTELLER campaign information

[AG-Covid-safe-action.png](#)

Check out these Action Guidelines and Safety and Legal Guidelines for participating in action safely during the Pandemic. (Or host an Affinity Group Zoom meeting to make your own Face Masks!) And more Resources here.

Digital Rebellion

Most action designs come with digital action suggestions which enable more rebels to participate.

Here is one in support of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Bill: Ask your MP to back the CEE Bill

A digital action for the Global Money Rebellion: Earth Tax Strike

The Digital Rebellion campaign against the Bank of England was a huge success, culminating in a written response from Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey (read more here). WATCH THIS SPACE for more Digital Rebellion campaigns targeting big corporate lobbyists and polluters in the future...

And check out the Digital Rebellion platform and tips from Australia: [VIEW MORE ABOUT AUSTRALIA'S DIGITAL REBELLION HERE](#)

ACTION SUPPORT AND TRAININGS

How To Action Guide and Little Green Book

Read up on the NVDA How To Action Guide here: [CHECK OUT THE GUIDE HERE](#)

And refresh your memory on the AG Little Green Book here: [READ THE LGB HERE](#)

Don't Panic! Action Guide

Handy pocket book for actions from the Regenerative Culture team. It was designed for use during London rebellions but still contains useful information: [READ IT HERE](#)

RISE CWUP Training

Explore this pre-Action emotional, practical and legal preparation document. Perhaps invite your Affinity Group to experience it together, in preparation for your next Action. It is a **LIVE DOCUMENT** and is updated regularly [EXPLORE IT HERE](#)

And remind yourself of how to support each other during future actions. Start with this video about Witnessing an Arrest: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKqLWUsL81s&app=desktop>

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LET'S GET CREATIVE...

☐ XR Art Group Resources: [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

☐ Paint the Streets Guidelines: [HERE](#)

☐ Paint the Streets FAQs: [HERE](#)

☐ No Going Back Ideas: [HERE](#)

☐ MAKE YOUR OWN XR POSTERS: [HERE](#)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This Rebellion our Actions will say NO to the system as it is.

Alongside our Actions, we can hold Community Assemblies.

These are a way of hearing the voices of every person - no one dominates and each contribution is valued. Radical democratic movements from all over the world use them to organise themselves. Organised communities are forces to be reckoned with...

The Community Assemblies will say YES to a better world.

Get skilled up on Community Organising with Trust the People here: <https://xrb.link/z8tLG9>

More information on Trust The People here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ky2sPRC-g7Yp4SRqzD8AaDcxVAEsQKYB/view>