

## WORKSHOP:

### **Solidarity in the face of climate disasters: Mutual aid as an antidote**

A Workshop brought to you in the framework of the project "Skills4Crisis": [www.skills4crisis.org](http://www.skills4crisis.org)

This workshop was developed by Payal Parekh and Jayda Sauseng (Humus).

#### **Title of the Workshop:**

## **Solidarity in the face of climate disasters: Mutual aid as an antidote**

- Duration: 6 hours
- Offline
- When (fill in as host): \_\_\_\_\_
- Where (fill in as host): \_\_\_\_\_
- How many participants (fill in as host): \_\_\_\_\_ (we suggest a max. of 20 people)



#### **Invitation text**



This Workshop will discuss how a shift towards mutual aid, towards cooperative networks for collective action to meet the needs of a community for common benefit, could be indispensable for withstanding climate disasters justly. It would likely also strengthen solidarity and accountability within society.

But what could this look like?

This interactive session will explore the concept of mutual aid by drawing from examples globally and how the concept can be applied within the European context through a decolonial and anti-racist lens.

## WORKSHOP: Re-Centering Mental Health in Times of Social Collapse and Multiple Crises

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Starting time (you fill this in depending on your starting time)	Dur- ation	Topic & goal of this part	Proposals for Method & content inspiration	Materials needed
	15 min	<b>Start</b>	<p><b>Opening</b>            Introduction about facilitators            Background of the workshops (Skills4Crisis Project)            Logistics (eg. pictures/Screenshots taken, breaks, etc. )            Hand signals</p> <p><b>Group Agreement / Invitations</b>            Take responsibility for your own learning and your needs – ask if you need anything.            Step up, step back.            We will be generous with each other.            We will do our best to listen attentively to one another.            We will create a courageous space to experiment with new ways of thinking.</p> <p>Are there any others among you?/Do you agree with these?</p>	
	15 min	<b>Intro- ductions</b>	<p>1) Stand up, place yourself on a "map" of Europe (XY is in the center of the room)</p> <p>2) Round of introductions:            Each person says their name, pronouns (if desired), city, group (if desired) and answers these two questions:            * What motivated you to be here?            * What do you hope to learn today?</p>	
	30 min	<b>Terminology &amp; Definitions</b>	<p>What associations / thoughts / ideas do people have with the following terms:            * Crisis            * Polycrisis</p>	One flipchart for each term - the group can hang

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Disaster</li> <li>* Collapse</li> </ul> <p>1) note thoughts on sticky notes alone (2 min)  2) Show definitions on slides / flip charts  3) open discussion: What was surprising? What is missing? Clarify how the definitions will be used in the Workshop</p>	the sticky notes on the appropriate flipchart and then walk from flipchart to flipchart and discuss (good for people who need movement and to stay awake!).
	5 min	<b>Getting to know feelings and emotions</b>	<b>Input</b>  <b>3 layers of emotions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* direct reactions to extreme weather events (necessity of crisis intervention)</li> <li>* psychological and physiological factors of the progressing climate crisis (eg. Heat days)</li> <li>* climate anxiety (also by people not directly affected)</li> </ul> <b>Coping:</b> Strategies and Goals / Different Support for Different Levels of Stress / Balance / The Arc Between Ignorance, Denial vs. Overwhelm	
	25 min	<b>Exploring feelings and emotions</b>	<b>1) Individual exercise (7 min)</b> Write / Draw / or move around  Feelings that prevent you from acting – how can you increase your ability to act? Where is this feeling located? When does it occur? What do you want to communicate to this feeling?  <b>3) Discuss this with two other people (5 min)</b>  <b>4) In the larger group</b> Briefly introduce yourselves – which strategies do you use? Levels: Distraction (briefly) / Feeling powerless / feeling useless / not knowing how to react	Further instructions on the method: <a href="https://skills4crisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Facing-Extreme-Weather-Guide-to-the-moving-through-method.pdf">https://skills4crisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Facing-Extreme-Weather-Guide-to-the-moving-through-method.pdf</a>

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			Goal: Move away from purely reacting – towards a proactive response. Sort through the strategies – which are helpful in the long term, and which are not. Which one suits me personally?	
<b>15 min. Break + Energizer</b>				
	25 min	<b>Solidarity / Mutual Aid</b>	1) Ask the group if anyone can give a definition, Collect 2-3 definitions from the group, write them on a flip chart 2) Show 3 definitions on slides/flipcharts 3) Collect attributes - sticky notes, short discussion 4) Share the Mutual Aid Chart by Dean Spade	Flip charts  Mutual Aid Chart: <a href="https://www.deanspade.net/2019/12/04/mutual-aid-chart/">https://www.deanspade.net/2019/12/04/mutual-aid-chart/</a>
<b>1:30 Lunch Break</b>				
	5 min	<b>Transition</b>	<b>Energizer</b>  Then: Morning - Focus on feelings, understanding concepts We move on to action. We will analyze the reaction to real extreme weather events and then consider how we could react.	
	35 min	<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Split up in 2 groups.</b> 1) Flood in Ahrtal, Germany 2) Typhoon Haiyan, the Philippines  1) Each group reads 1 case study.  2) Discuss the following questions in groups: * Who are the key players? What were their roles? * Who filled in the gaps? * Who suffered the most? * What was done well? * Before the disaster?	Breakout rooms  Case Study "Ahrtal": <a href="https://skills4crisis.org/resource/case-study-flooding-in-ahrtal/">https://skills4crisis.org/resource/case-study-flooding-in-ahrtal/</a>  Case Study "Typhoon Haiyan": <a href="https://skills4crisis.org/resource/case-study-typhoon-haiyan/">https://skills4crisis.org/resource/case-study-typhoon-haiyan/</a>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* During the disaster?</li> <li>* After the disaster?</li> </ul>	<a href="http://org/resource/case-study-typhoon-haiyan/">org/resource/case-study-typhoon-haiyan/</a>
	30 min	<b>Case Study: Action Plan</b>	<p><b>In your groups:</b> Ask each group one or two questions to elicit their conclusions.</p> <p>Imagine you could get into a time machine and go back to just before the storm. How would you react? Prepare a response to a similar event. Discuss and prepare for the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What is your main role during a crisis?</li> <li>* What are your non-objectives (what you DON'T do)?</li> <li>* How do you prepare?</li> <li>* What values does your group align with?</li> <li>* Which groups will be prioritized for help?</li> <li>* How do you organize yourselves (structure/decision-making process)?"</li> </ul>	Breakout rooms, Miro board (or other)
<b>15 min. Break + Energizer</b>				
	25 min	<b>Case Study: Presentation &amp; Discussion</b>	<p>Each group presents their plan. Discuss: What was challenging?</p>	
	25 min	<b>Discussion</b>	<p>What happens next? What else would you like to know? Do you feel better prepared, have any new topics come up?</p>	
	25 min	<b>CLOSING</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lessons Learnt: What do you take away?</li> <li>2) Feedback for the workshop</li> <li>3) Further Announcements</li> </ol>	

## **Definitions**

**Crisis:** “a time of great difficulty, disagreement, confusion, danger, or suffering” - Cambridge Dictionary

**Polycrisis:** “The idea of polycrisis describes how different, overlapping breakdowns — from climate disasters to pandemics to rising — interact in ways that are more overwhelming than any single cause. Together, these interconnected crises challenge our capacity to cope, think, and act. And importantly, they also make us feel vulnerable, anxious, and fearful.” - Firoozeh Farvadin, 2025

**Disaster:** „A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.” - United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN-DRR)

**Collapse** (Nr. 1): “Societal collapse means when a complex human society falls apart or breaks down. This can happen because of natural disasters, environmental change, using too many resources, complexity problems, loss of social unity, more inequality, or losing creativity.” - Wikipedia, simple English

**Collapse** (Nr. 2): “the fall of a socio-ecological system characterized by the loss of complexity, structure and order”  
- Just Collaps Plattform