

Extinction Rebellion Tamaki Makaurau

Auckland Verbal Toolkit

Purpose

This is a guide for XRTMA members on how to communicate to members of the public during NVDA's (non-violent direct actions).

It has two sections;

1. Effectively and inspiringly communicating the climate crisis to bystanders
2. How to de-escalate tension or aggression.

Document

This document was last updated on [August 15th]. It can be found at: [insert link].

Please provide feedback and suggestions to: [auckland@extinctionrebellion.nz].

This document was originally written by Extinction Rebellion Auckland on [August 15th]. It was adapted from the Extinction Rebellion UK document written in July 2019¹ and is available [here](#).

¹ Extinction Rebellion UK (July 2019) "Introductory Session". Available at: [\[insert link\]](#). Last accessed on document written in 13 August 2019.

How to Communicate

Remember to ask people “what” and “how” questions:

- What do you know about the climate crisis?
- Have you ever considered the power of collective action
- How do you feel when you hear stories about ecological breakdown?
- How do you think it might impact you?
- What do you think will happen if we do nothing?
- How do you imagine your child/grandchild/niece/nephews... future will turn out if nothing changes?
- What do you think should be done about the crisis?
- What do you think YOU can do to make a change?
- Do you know about XR, and what they are trying to achieve?

We are not there to lecture people, but to listen, learn and then inform. Don't be a dick.

Communicating the Climate Crisis

Global Facts

- IPCC 11 year warning to halve climate emissions by 2030 (Many climate scientists believe the time frame should be shorter)
- CO2 levels are now the highest in 3 million years
- In 2018 carbon emissions grew by 2.7%.
- Not a single country is on target for the Paris agreement
- Paris agreements = 3.2 degree warming
 - There will be no ice sheets at 3.2 degrees
- In the history of humanity, the planet has never been this hot. (currently 1.1c higher than pre-industrial era)
- Business as Usual
- More than 50% of carbon emissions are from the last 30 years, since we've known about climate change.

Aotearoa Facts

- By 2050 Auckland's climate will be like Sydney. About 1.9 degrees hotter. Wellington will be like Auckland.
- 800,000 NZ homes at risk of flooding from sea-level rise

Dealing with Deniers

- Work on the premise that they are ill-informed rather than evil (Surely no-one truly wants the reality of climate change?)
- Find common ground with anyone you talk to. Even the most vehement denier will share something in common with you.
- Focus on the things you can relate to, and discuss why your opinions differ
- Many deniers do not deny climate change is happening, but doubt that it is man made. Use the evidence
- Ask questions a lot more than provide information. You are trying to get them to question their beliefs, so use leading questions asking why they think what they think and what are they basing their opinion on.
- Never get into angry or into pointless arguments
 - Waste of energy and will cement their view even further
 - It creates an us vs them divide. We are trying to get people to join together.
- Angles:
 - Classic argument: If you have a problem you ask a specialist. If you have a leak, you ask a plumber. If you are ill you ask a doctor etc... Why then when the climate is screwed are people not listening to the experts?
 - Plot line: Scientific communities, agencies and worldwide organisations are all in on a huge conspiracy to charge more taxes, while the only people brave enough to stand up against them are a handful of megarich CEOs of oil companies.

People who agree but aren't active

- Ask lots of questions about what they feel they could do to help
- Ask them specifically about XR and what their views are
 - If they are positive try to get them on board
 - If they are negative, or show reservations, address them and take on board what they are saying
- Provide details and links to the different XR groups
- The aim is to get them active and joining in with us
- Explain the financial motivation behind everyday changes like solar panelling, eating less meat, driving an electric car.

Why XR?

- Change needs to be forced at a political level

- It is through our actions that we send the message that change needs to happen

De-Escalate Aggressive Members of the Public During Blockades

Summarise the emotion and the reason (as a question) and say you are sorry they they feel that way

“You’re really angry I can see that – and you really want to be on your way yeah?”

Then the person is likely to start telling you why – ie someone will listen to him or her so off they go..

They may say “This is a total fuck up for me I have to be at x in 10 minutes -... etc”

After that it is pretty straightforward – you just repeat back in a shorter form what they have said

“Yeah okay so you’re angry that you’re late”

When they have calmed down a bit (and not before – because they are unable to hear you) you can apologise and explain what is happening in a basic way (no facts)

“Well I’m so sorry you have been held up – the protest is about air pollution which a lot of people are really concerned about”

They will then come back with lots of reasons why blocking a road is a bad idea

And you can say (not don’t say “but” or “well” – use “at the same time” or “and”)

“Yeah I can see what you mean – you think there are lots of better ways to deal with issue and I think you are right it’s important that people do those things. At the same time the government is doing nothing and people are dying.... Some people want to make a bigger point about this”

.. and so on – try to find a common point you agree on

“yeah well we both agree the government should get sorted on it – you’re right there”

And then thank him or her for their patience



“well thanks for speaking to me about all this and yeah I’m really sorry again for the delay – looks like things will be going in a minute – thanks again for your patience”

Gracefully exit the conversation!