

Sustaining All Life

# Sustaining Ourselves as Activists and Organizers

## Everyone Welcome!

Saturday 9/8 | after march | Civic Center

Monday 9/10 | 1:30 - 3:00 PM | SF City College downtown



We all want to build and sustain a strong environmental movement. To do this we must have a place to share and heal from feelings about climate change and any discouragement we feel about taking needed action. We need support to maintain and build our connections with each other and address difficulties together. And we need a place to heal from the effects of our oppressive societies.

In this workshop, we will:

- Share our passion and vision for our work,
- Share our worries, fears, and despair about climate change in a supportive listening environment,
- Learn about the theory and practice the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling\* as a strategy to address the difficulties in our movements and our organizing,
- Hear from people who have applied these tools to resolve hurtful experiences and become more effective at reaching our goals for a sustainable future.

Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism are international grassroots organizations working to end climate change within the context of ending all divisions among people. We use the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling to free ourselves from the harm done by oppression and other experiences that separate us from one another and from the world around us. These tools provide ongoing mutual support and enable people to listen deeply to one another as we do personal healing work. Our goals include:

- Increasing awareness of the existence of and damage caused by climate change,
- Freeing people from oppression and hurts that turn them against one another and make them compete for resources,
- Supporting one another to organize effectively to preserve and restore the environment.

### *Interpretation in Spanish*

\* Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) is a well-defined theory and practice that helps people of all ages and backgrounds exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the emotional scars of oppression and other hurts. By taking turns listening to each other and encouraging emotional release, people can heal old hurts and become better able to think, to speak out, and to organize and lead others in building a world in which all human beings and other life forms are valued and the environment is restored and preserved.



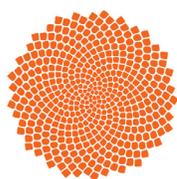
# The Work of Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism

It is possible to limit the effects of human-caused climate change and restore the environment—and some big changes are needed if this is to happen. *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism*\* believe the environmental crisis cannot be resolved without ending racism, genocide toward Indigenous peoples, classism, sexism, and other oppressions. The impact of environmental destruction and climate change falls most heavily on people targeted by these particular oppressions. Making the changes needed will require a massive movement, spanning the globe, of people of every background fighting the effects of both climate change and racism.

In *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* we believe that the barriers to building a sufficiently large and powerful movement include (1) longstanding divisions (usually caused by oppression, and especially racism and classism) between nations and between groups of people within nations, (2) widespread feelings of discouragement and powerlessness among the populations of all countries, (3) denial of or failure to engage with the environmental crisis, and (4) difficulties in effectively addressing the connections between the environmental crisis and the failures of capitalism. *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* work to address these issues and others.

## **The role of oppression**

Our societies are based on exploitation and oppression demanding growth and profit with little regard for the effects on people, other life forms, or the Earth. Oppressions (such as racism, classism, sexism, and the oppression of young people) inflict tremendous injustices, limit access to resources, and damage the lives of billions of people. Once targeted by oppression, we are pulled to act out on others the hurts that we have experienced. Much of the emotional damage done to humans is the result of this passing on of hurt. Though humans are vulnerable to acting out oppression, oppressive behavior is not inherent, but arises only when a human has been hurt emotionally. Oppressive societies manipulate this vulnerability to establish and maintain economic exploitation.



Sustaining All Life

## **The importance of healing personal damage**

The emotional harm done to us in our societies by oppression interferes with our ability to think clearly and sets groups of people against each other. This makes it difficult for us to think about and respond effectively to the environmental crisis. People would not cooperate with a society that exploits people and damages the environment if they had not first been hurt.

Healing from the hurts that help to hold oppression in place and lead to other damaging behavior is not quick or easy work. Many of us resist it or we may have survived by numbing ourselves to the damage we carry and by assuming that we will never be free of it.

In *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* we have learned that it is possible to free ourselves from these hurts. We can heal from hurtful experiences if someone listens to us attentively and allows and encourages us to release the grief, fear, and other painful emotions. This happens by means of our natural healing processes—talking, crying, trembling, expressing anger, and laughing. By releasing distressed feelings in a supportive network, we can stay united, hopeful, thoughtful, joyful, and committed. This in turn strengthens us in building our movements to stop the effects of climate change and racism.

---

\* *Sustaining All Life* (SAL) is an international grassroots organization working to end climate change within the context of ending all divisions among people. *United to End Racism* (UER) is a group of people of all ages and backgrounds, in many different countries, who are dedicated to eliminating racism in the world and supporting the efforts of all other groups with this goal. UER and SAL are projects of and use the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling. Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) is a well-defined theory and practice that helps people of all ages and backgrounds exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the emotional scars of oppression and other hurts. By taking turns listening to each other and encouraging emotional release, people can heal old hurts and become better able to think, to speak out, and to organize and lead others in building a world in which human beings and other life forms are valued and the environment is restored and preserved.

**For more information, see:**  
[www.sustainingalllife.org](http://www.sustainingalllife.org) or [www.unitedtoendracism.org](http://www.unitedtoendracism.org)  
**or write:** Sustaining All Life/United to End Racism  
719 Second Ave North, Seattle, WA 98109, USA  
**Email:** [ircc@rc.org](mailto:ircc@rc.org) **Tel:** +1-206-284-0311

