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Learning collective care to support young climate justice advocates

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ABSTRACT

Young people mitigate their climate distress, develop their efficacy, and contribute to the effectiveness of climate movements through activism. However, they are often excluded from adult-led climate movements and exposed to a number of risks when they do participate. In this context, this participatory action research study draws on multiple care theories to offer collective care praxis through which adults and young people might co-create more care-full and safe climate justice movements capable of supporting, sustaining, and sharing power with young people. The study examines how 13 young and three adult co-researchers learned about and applied collective care through a youth climate justice training program in Western Australia. The program enabled young people to engage with climate emotions, identify care practices, and map support networks. Furthermore, the study developed three practices for adult-led climate movements engaging with young people: Responding to intersectionality with active solidarity, child safeguarding, and building care-full community coalitions. We conclude that a collective care praxis offers organisers and activists in all their diversities an opportunity to prefigure more care-full and just climate movements.

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Introduction

> We know taking action can help when we feel despair – but if we do not have support, good mentoring and capacity building opportunities, this action can lead to us burning out. We need adults around us to support our actions and help us be effective. - WA youth climate activists (Godden et al. 2021, p. 1762)

Emerging literature suggests that multi-layered support systems are necessary for young people to build their collective efficacy (Crandon et al. 2022) and transform feelings of climate distress into transformative collective action (Verlie 2021). *Environmental Education Research* has commonly attended to how parents and educators provide this support (Baker, Clayton, and Bragg 2021; McGregor and Christie 2021; Trott 2022), yet the contribution of climate movements

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remains under-examined. Moreover, young climate activists, in all their diversities, are often excluded from adult-led climate movements, and when they do participate, they are at risk of burn-out, tokenistic non-participation and even harassment (Conner et al. 2023; Pereznieto, Rivett, and Marcus 2020; Tisdall and Cuevas-Parra 2022).

This article shares insights from a training program about the intersections of climate justice, collective care and systemic advocacy that took place on Noongar Country (the Aboriginal lands of the southwest of Western Australia). As activists and co-researchers (under and over 18 years old) in a participatory action research study (PAR), we are interested in two practical issues: Firstly, how climate movement organisations (CMOs) and adult organisers can support young people's wellbeing and advocacy. Secondly, how climate justice advocates can confront and organise alternatives to the careless and exclusionary systems of power reproduced by the climate movement (Sultana 2022). Informed by feminist, Indigenous, and allied care theories and practice (Care Collective 2021; Carr 2022; Hobart and Kneese 2020; Moore and Russell 2011; Nannup 2006; Osborne 2023; Sultana 2022), this article offers collective care as a praxis through which adult-led climate movements may become more care-full, safe, and just for young people to engage in.

The first section presents a conceptual framework for climate justice, community organising and collective care. A review of multi-disciplinary literature then builds our case for care-full climate movements by presenting evidence of young people's climate distress and highlighting the need for research on how adult organisers and CMOs can support them. Our critiques of mainstream climate movements and the risks and challenges of youth activism demonstrate why it is important to centre, rather than marginalise, young activists' prefigurative leadership, ideas, and values in pursuit of more care-full climate movements. Following an outline of the research methodology and training program, we examine how collective care was applied through the program and used to develop care-full practices for adult organisers working with young people. To conclude, collective care is proposed as a praxis for organisers and activist educators with the potential to support, sustain and share power with young people in the climate movement.

Climate justice, community organising and care

Climate justice recognises multiple inequities of climate change: the communities who contribute the least to climate change are often most affected by its impacts while simultaneously being marginalised from key climate decision-making (Newell et al. 2021; Pettit 2004). Indeed, climate justice is a contested term (Newell et al. 2021) and not well established, or at least publicly communicated, among environmental non-government organisations (NGOs) in Australia (Gulliver, Vachette, and Boddington 2023). Thus, this article deliberately distinguishes climate *justice* movements from 'mainstream' climate change or environmental movements that tend to focus on technoscientific actions to reduce carbon emissions. The former is informed by frontline realities, concerns and alternatives from the Global South, working-class, low-income, rural, Indigenous, and other historically marginalised communities (Pettit 2004). However, young climate justice advocates in the Global North have been critical of how mainstream climate movements reproduce exclusionary and discriminatory processes that marginalise young, particularly disabled, and Indigenous activists (Bowman 2020; Randall 2021; Ritchie 2021). Adultism in the movement seemingly intersects with the very same inequitable systems of power that climate justice confronts, including neoliberal capitalism, coloniality, racism and ableism (Sultana 2022).

To redress climate change and transform injustices reproduced through climate politics, Sultana (2022) proposes care-full, resplendent climate revolutions that draw on the tools and teachings of care politics, ethics, and practices. Among them, feminist care ethics bring a gendered lens to the analysis of the distribution of climate burdens and labour (Gardner, Williams, and Macdonald 2023; MacGregor, Arora-Jonsson, and Cohen 2022). Crip, queer and anti-racist

care ethics highlight how some bodies are made more precarious by systems designed against their survival (Hobart and Kneese 2020; Osborne 2023). Indigenous knowledges, along with multi-species and ecofeminist theories, construct care as a reciprocal, anti-colonial and place-based practice (Jax et al. 2018). The ethics of care and repair advocate redressing the structural causes of climate change, adapting to already present planetary destruction, and repairing a safe climate for the next generation (Carr 2022). On Noongar Country, where our work takes place, the creation story of *Moondang-Ak Kaaradjiny* (The Carers of Everything; Nannup 2006) informs our understanding of the custodial responsibilities humans have for community and Country (land, sea, sky and all life) that must be maintained and restored.

In practice, collective care includes the highly political work of social movements organising social change and prefiguring otherwise ways of being (Sargsyan 2018). Authors of *The Care Manifesto* loosely describe care as the ability to provide the political, social, material, and emotional conditions for individual and collective survival (Care Collective 2021). This includes the practical, familial, hands-on and everyday essential service performances of care, as well as the paid and unpaid care work of activists, advocates, and organisers. The activist handbook *Organising Cools the Planet* highlights that "'invisible' work of taking care of ourselves and each other is often not recognised or valued" yet is central to sustaining and mobilising diverse and effective movements (Moore and Russell 2011, p. 43). It argues that 'we need to extend our care practices beyond our personal relationships or even our immediate political networks while understanding that if we cannot take care of each other, we cannot do this work' (p. 43).

However, Hobart and Kneese (2020) identify several limitations and misappropriations of radical care, including the commodification of self-care and the undervaluing of unpaid care labour. They argue that neoliberal co-optation has created a false binary between self and collective care. Our understanding of collective care and liberation rejects this self/collective binary, recognising that a 'self' is always relational and the personal is political. Additionally, they note that the unglamorous, cumulative and maintenance work of care is often undervalued and unevenly distributed across lines of race, gender, and class. For example, Gardner, Williams, and Macdonald (2023) found that the environmental group Extinction Rebellion relies on older women activists to provide care in the movement, perpetuating patriarchal and ageist expectations. Our collective care praxis cautions against inequitable divisions of unpaid care labour while understanding that providing care can be empowering *and* a burden. Finally, Hobart and Kneese (2020) highlight that care can be misconstrued by the politically and socially privileged as charity for 'the other'. However, if whatever is recieved is unwanted or harmful, it is not care (Bond, Thomas, and Diprose 2020). Thus, our collective care praxis is inspired by words from Queensland an Aboriginal activist group in the 1970s: 'If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together' (Watson 2004).

This article understands collective care as a critical praxis. Paulo Freire defines praxis as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (2017, p. 251). We argue that a collective care praxis can inform how CMOs engage with young people and their communities to support them better and counter the carelessness that marginalises them from climate action and drives climate injustice. To conclude this conceptual section, note that we refer to community organising and organisers specifically while interchangeably using *activism*, *advocacy* and *action*. We intend to evoke the wide range of activities and theories of change enlisted by movements while highlighting the essential 'behind the scenes' work upon which movements rely, including activist education and mentorship (Maddison and Shaw 2012).

Supporting young people to be effective and well climate activists

We now draw on multi-disciplinary literature to build a case for climate movements as potential sites of collective care to support young climate activists. This section highlights the impacts of climate change on young people's well-being, then identifies CMOs as under-recognised

sources of support and caveats the risks and challenges of youth climate activism before noting the vital role of young people in creating more care-full movements.

People, young and old, experience a mixture of climate emotions, including worry, anger, stress, and motivation to create change (Pihkala 2022). A survey of 891 Australians aged 16 to 25 years found that young people experience a unique combination of disempowerment that, when combined with climate distress, can negatively impact their well-being, be traumatising and even cause or exacerbate mental health conditions (Fava, Gao, and Baker 2023). The study found that an awareness of inaction fuels the participants' climate distress, worry about their future, upsetting media coverage, and first-hand experience of the direct impacts of climate change, disasters, and extreme weather.

While extreme distress and harm should be mitigated, young people's concerns and emotions surrounding climate inaction are valid and should not be placated. Climate emotions and distress can motivate transformative action (Verlie 2021). Yet, Kałwak and Weihgold (2022) argue that when Western biomedical literature, policy and treatments typically focus on clinical interventions that build individual resilience, they are 'only addressing the acute symptoms of the phenomenon and not the underlying social and environmental causes that trigger the emotions' (p. 8). In contrast, relational and socio-ecological literature identifies responses to climate anxiety as part of a holistic practice of connection to place, self, and collective efficacy (Crandon et al. 2022; Kałwak and Weihgold 2022). From this perspective, a key recommended strategy to build self and collective resilience, efficacy, and agency is for young people to engage in climate action (Godden et al. 2021). This requires multiple layers of age-specific support and education provided through policy, schools, health care, youth services, media, and parents (Crandon et al. 2022). Godden and co-authors (2021), including young activists in WA, argue that children and young people need to be involved in co-designing place-based research, policy, services, and programmes that support youth efficacy and well-being in the climate movement. However, this literature does not explicitly identify CMOs as sites and sources of support for young people concerned about climate change.

Parents, guardians, and educators are not always able to support young people's climate action due to their lack of sufficient climate justice literacy, emotional resilience or the petro-pedagogical influence of fossil fuel corporations in schools (Baker, Clayton, and Bragg 2021; Dunlop et al. 2021; McGregor and Christie 2021). Thus, some young people, their families and educators turn to their peers and leaders in the climate movement (MacKay, Parlee, and Karsgaard 2020; Mayes 2020; McGregor and Christie 2021). Adult activists can contribute to young peoples' support networks by helping them understand climate change, offering emotional support, and providing practical assistance to engage in action. Support includes sharing practical knowledge, experience, and resources to support young people's activism, such as legal expertise and relationships with police and policymakers (Elsen and Ord 2021; Gradoni and Mantovani 2023). However, CMOs and adult activists' duty of care to support young people's emotional well-being remains under-examined.

Youth activism risks and challenges

Although activism and the support of adult activists can help mitigate young people's climate distress and foster collective efficacy, it is worth reflecting on the risks and challenges of youth climate activism. When adult climate activists engage with young people, it is often tokenistic or non-participatory, with power balances favouring adult preferences (Elsen and Ord 2021). An intersectional perspective is necessary here. As with the impacts of climate change, the risks of youth activism are not evenly distributed. Youth is an identity category that intersects with others, such as race, ability, sexual orientation, gender, and class (Arnot et al. 2023; Bowman 2020); thus, young people experience marginalisation and agency differently. Indigenous, disabled, and girl youth activists, in particular, have been critical when climate movements

reproduce adultist, colonial, ableist, patriarchal and racist-capitalist systems of power that marginalise, silence, overlook or trivialise young people's diverse agency (Bowman 2020; Randall 2021; Ritchie 2021). Some youth school strike groups are hampered by their lack of diversity despite being performative of intersectionality (Cammaerts 2023).

Additionally, young activists may experience burnout and overwhelm (Conner et al. 2023; Godden et al. 2021). They can experience violence and harassment on-ground and online from adults outside the movement (such as police and media) and those within it (Pereznieto, Rivett, and Marcus 2020; Tisdall and Cuevas-Parra 2022). To our knowledge, there is no research on the risks of child abuse or counteractive child safeguarding measures within climate or related movements in Australia or internationally. However, in Australia, a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlights that abuse, harassment, discrimination, and violence occur in a variety of settings, including community-based organisations and groups. It asserts that all organisations engaging with children have legal and moral obligations to adopt child-safeguarding strategies that protect children and young people from harm (Commonwealth of Australia 2017).

These critiques are not analogous to paternalistic and misogynistic media discourses about children, particularly girls, lacking the resilience or maturity to engage in political climate action (Alexander, Petray, and McDowall 2022; Cammaerts 2023). Instead, the critiques of mainstream climate movements underscore the need for more care-full movements. Furthermore, they highlight the imperative of adult organisers to safeguard and support children and young people engaging in climate activism. Indeed, gatekeeping activism from young people would exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and distress (Tisdall and Cuevas-Parra 2022) and fail to recognise their vital leadership.

Intergenerational alliances for climate justice

Young climate justice advocates, in all their diversities, contribute heterodox and intersectional perspectives to climate movements. From their intersectional standpoint, young activists often demonstrate highly nuanced and critical understandings of climate injustice, along with capabilities for organising alternative activist practices (Arnot et al. 2023; Godden et al. 2021; Pickard 2022). Subaltern youth-led climate justice movements are often counter-hegemonic responses to mainstream climate movements (Bowman 2020; Elsen and Ord 2021; Trott, 2022) as they reject normalised, racial, colonial and patriarchal power dynamics in their groups and prefigure radical alternatives (Grosse and Mark 2020). For example, climate activism studies have shown that young Maori activists in Aotearoa, New Zealand, enact decolonial solidarity and participatory justice (Ritchie 2021), and young Indigenous activists in North America prioritise inclusion and access, intersectionality, community and relational organising (Grosse and Mark 2020). In the UK, young people enact their preferred values of justice, cooperation, belonging, hope, and kindness (Pickard 2022), and in Canada, young eco-activists demonstrate a preference for relational approaches to justice that are intersectional, intergenerational and place-based (Larocque 2023).

Young people's leadership and capacity also help adult-led movements adopt new skills and accessible communication methods to appeal to wider audiences (Cocco-Klein and Mauger 2018). For example, youth-led climate litigation demonstrates how alliances across ages are mutually beneficial and facilitate valuable learnings for the climate justice movement (Gradoni and Mantovani 2023). Although courts have seldom found that governments have a duty of care to take ambitious action to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on current and future generations, rights-based and intergenerational messaging has been effective at evoking the moral and legal responsibilities of political and institutional decision-makers and adult family and community members to ensure young people's well-being (Cocco-Klein and Mauger 2018; Nisbett and Spaiser 2023).

In summary, young people, particularly those living in racialised or differently abled bodies, are in a precarious and paradoxical position. Some young people are distressed and disillusioned by climate change and the lack of action by adults. They are encouraged to engage in climate action and exercise agency; however, if they turn to adult-led movements, they may risk being excluded, burnt out, or harmed. Rather than steer young people away from activism, we argue that adult climate organisers and organisations have a duty of care to foster care-full climate movements that support, safeguard and sustain young people (among others). The remainder of this article examines how young and adult co-researchers in a PAR study learned and applied collective care as a praxis for climate justice through a training program.

Methodology

Following requests for climate justice training by a group of young people, their parents, and educators, Climate Justice Union of Western Australia (CJU) developed a youth-specific climate justice advocacy training program. Participatory action research (PAR) was embedded within the program to identify community organising strategies to support young people wanting to engage in climate justice advocacy in WA. Feminist and youth approaches to PAR are practical political tools for mobilising movements and developing skills, capacity, and knowledge to demand climate justice (Godden et al. 2020). They regard adults and youth as partners in the coproduction of action (practice) and reflection (knowledge) (Elsen and Ord 2021) and are responsive to power differentials in research (Askins 2018). However, PAR is scarcely used in youth climate activism research (Neas, Ward, and Bowman 2022).

In 2022, CJU delivered a seven-week online *youth systemic advocacy and collective care training program* (hereafter the 'program') that was co-designed by three adults and five young people (aged 15-19). Table 1 provides a summary of the PAR and training program structure. The program aimed to support young people on Noongar lands to be more effective and well in their systemic advocacy for climate justice. It was delivered to 13 participants aged 12-19 who self-identified as interested in climate justice and creating social change with different levels of activist experience. The participants had a wide range of cultural, racial, and gender identities and lived in rural and urban areas. Nine used she/her pronouns, two used he/him and one used he/they pronouns. Five identified as a person of colour, seven did not, and one identified as Aboriginal. To ensure ethical research and child safeguarding during the program, rolling consent was sought at each research stage, with parental co-consent sought for participants under 16. Participants named in this article gave permission to use either their name or a pseudonym; however, no additional identifying information was provided to preserve their anonymity.

During the program, adult co-researcher Kylie facilitated data collection. Pre- and post-training surveys collected qualitative data about the young co-researchers' climate emotions, ways of taking care of themselves and peers, and their engagement in climate action. Qualitative data was also collected during the program sessions, using audio recordings of reflective group discussions, group brainstorming, individual mapping activities and visual scribing (see Figure 1). Additional details on these methods are provided in the findings section.

Our data analysis incorporates elements of grounded theory and PAR, recognising that reflection is a form of emergent and iterative analysis (Dick 2007). Early analysis took place through reflective group discussions during the training. Between program sessions, adult co-researchers reflected on what young people had shared and adapted their practice accordingly. At the program's conclusion, all co-researchers and the co-design team were invited to attend an evaluation workshop and give feedback on the post-program report. Finally, the co-authors of this article, including activists and researchers over and under 18 years old, further theorised and problematised the findings. This layered and collective

Table 1. Overview of training program and participatory action research components.

	Activities (with reflective group discussions during and after all co-design and training sessions)	Iterative data collection, analysis and actions
Pre-training	Co-design sessions 1-3 Consultation with stakeholders Recruitment, enrolment, consent and parental co-consent for under 16s Pre-training survey about climate emotions, experience with and knowledge about climate justice and advocacy	Initial crafting of care-full practices Responding to participants' needs and preferences Responding to participants' needs and preferences
Program Delivery	Session 1: Connections • Introductions and expectation setting • Presentation and discussion about research and child safeguarding • Yarns with Aboriginal Elders Session 2: Climate justice 101 and collective care Brainstorming activities on: • The interconnections between matters of importance for their communities and the effects of climate change • Climate actions available, who benefits and who is left out • Ways of taking care of ourselves and each other Session 3: Dismantling systems of oppression • Deepening relationships • Information slides with FPAR Academy	Adaptations to participants' needs and preferences Data collection from group brainstorming notes. Defining collective care.
Mid-training	Co-design session 4-5: Draft program report prepared and assessed by codesign team	Responding to feedback
Program Delivery	Session 4: Systemic advocacy skills and panel • Information slides from Social Reinvestment WA • Panel discussion and questions with four local youth changemakers Session 5: Activism and decision-makers panel • Information slides from the Youth Affairs Council of WA • Question and answers with two decision-makers from government departments Session 6: Union power and organising actions • Information slides from a Union representative Session 7: Climate justice and collective care framework • Application of framework as a tool for being in action • Individual network mapping activity • Final reflections	 Visual scribing Reflective group discussions
Post-training	Post-training survey Evaluation workshop with members of the youth co-design team and 13 training participants Draft post-program report assessed by the codesign team and participants Final post-program report shared with participants and stakeholders Research writing	Survey data collection Visual scribing Responding to feedback Disseminating report Integrating practices Further analysis and theory-building

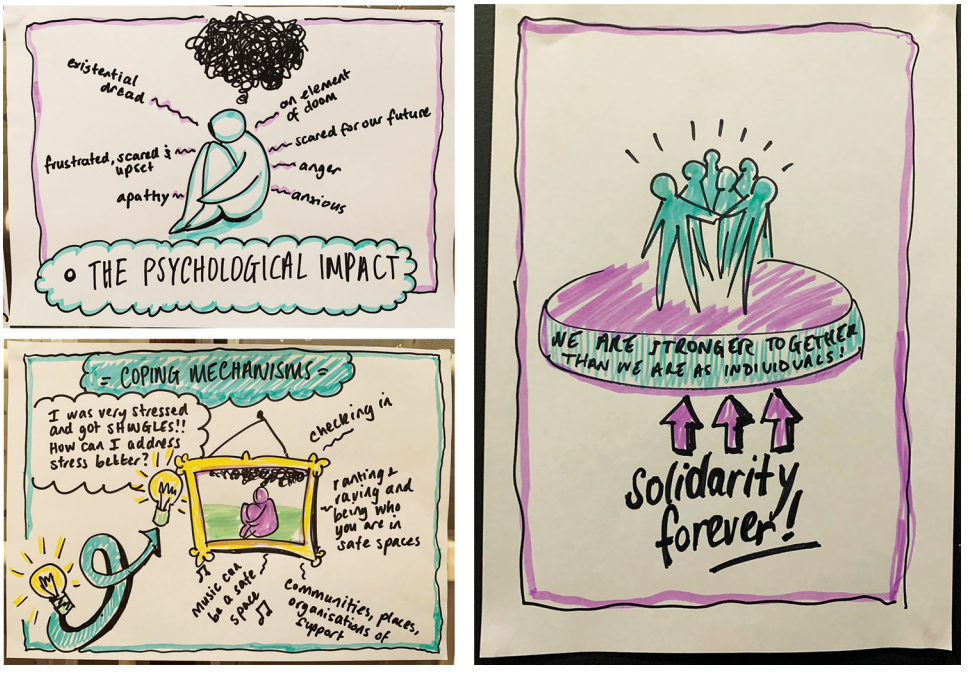

Figure 1. Visual scribing by samanta conner from the youth systemic advocacy and wellbeing training program 2022. Top left: Young people's emotional responses to climate change. Bottom left: Ways of coping with climate-related emotions. Right: Collective action is supported by solidarity.

approach to analysis ensures that young people's voices, realities and needs are centred (Liebenberg, Jamal, and Ikeda 2020). It is an attempt to mirror the participatory justice mantra 'nothing about us without us' that rejects the paternalism, gatekeeping, and saviourism that occurs when decision-makers or researchers speak for or act on behalf of marginalised groups.

Young people's climate emotions, care practices and support networks

This section shares young people's exploration of collective care. It is organised into two key themes: strategies for action and care in response to young people's climate emotions and their advocacy and community-based support networks.

Climate emotions and strategies for action and care

A pre-training survey invited young co-researchers to describe the emotions they recently felt when thinking about climate action. They were asked to reflect on Pihkala's (2022) taxonomy of climate emotions and describe their emotional responses to climate change. Negative feelings of fear, worry, anxiety, powerlessness, dread, and helplessness were most reported, followed by feelings of anger, rage, and frustration. For example, young co-researcher Li (pseudonym) said:

> I'm always a little angry that I will spend the rest of my years worrying about this, that I will never be able to have that carefree uni student experience, that I will graduate high school unsure of the stability of my environment. At one point I considered not going to university at all, instead dedicating my time after high school to the climate crisis. That thought makes me angry, that I had to consider missing out on a tertiary education for this.

Positive emotions, such as feelings of motivation, urge to act, and determination, were also common, often alongside negative emotions, as young co-researcher Haajrah described:

> I'd say determination ('cause surely there's something yet to do and change this), but disillusion ('cause I can't really grasp what's occurring to the environment) as well as a bit of confusion and powerlessness'

The pre-training survey asked young co-researchers how they take care of themselves and each other in relation to their feelings about climate change. Their responses included individual and collective care practices. Individual care practices included mindfulness, setting boundaries, self-compassion, and visioning. Collective care included spending time with others, seeking joy, talking, encouraging others to action, and training in mental health first aid. Connection emerged as a necessary strategy to process emotions around climate change. Young co-researchers often engaged in both individual and collective care practices. For example, Zoey said, 'I try to be kind with myself in that if I am tired or feel unproductive, etc., to let myself have a break and enjoy time with family and friends and doing things that bring me joy.' Haajrah mentioned relying on adult support, saying, 'Honestly, alerting trusted and capable adults is the only thing I can really do at this age.'

During a training session, young co-researchers identified and critically assessed climate action and care practices available to them and their peers. They first brainstormed climate change impacts in their communities and the climate actions they are aware or involved in, then identified ways of taking care of themselves and others. They were prompted to explore care practice with questions such as 'How are we told to look after ourselves?', 'Who benefits from these?', and 'What other ways of caring are there?'. Finally, the co-researchers rearranged the practices on a continuum from individualistic to collective (Figure 2).

We found that young co-researchers were, at first, more aware of self-care practices (see Figure 2) and individualistic climate action (e.g. dietary or waste behavioural change) than collective and systemic actions. Examining why individual practices are readily available, young co-researcher Ezra (pseudonym) commented that 'individual actions are less overwhelming than collective ones'. However, co-researchers also problematised that individual actions burden the individual with responsibility and guilt. They noticed that access to some forms of climate activism and mental health care is inequitable across age, regions, and income, given the cost, time

Figure 2. Ways of caring in response to climate emotions ranging from individual to collective. Group brainstorming from the youth systemic advocacy and wellbeing training program 2022.

and resources required to volunteer, participate in civil society and source mental health services. They also highlighted the commodification of self-care through wellness products and services.

Young co-researchers found the concept of collective care valuable and novel and agreed that care looks different for everyone. Connection to land, animals, and food production was considered an important care strategy; however, co-researchers had differing opinions about whether this was a collective or individual act. Adult co-researcher, Kylie, highlighted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of kinship and connecting to Country might be considered a collective and reciprocal form of care (for example, see Jax et al. 2018). Adult co-researcher, Jaime, summarised the importance of connection and community as a form of support and collective action:

> We all deal with stress really differently and we all need different things at different times. Part of the conversation we wanted to really have through this whole training, is that it's actually being part of a community, that's how we can get that support. So whether that's people that you're engaged in advocacy with, whether that's people that you share life experiences, it's about connection. That can be connection to Country, that can be connection to an actual place, that can be connection to your ancestors and your culture. It's not our own personal responsibility to deal with all of this burden on our own. It's actually part of our community to look at how we can care for each other.

Advocacy and community-based support networks

During the training, young co-researchers were invited to map their actual and potential support networks, including specific people, places, organisations, and groups. Community organisers use network and influence mapping tools to identify potential allies (and opponents), projects and communities, which inform relationship-building and strategy planning (Moore and Russell 2011). Network mapping allowed young people to identify sources of support and places to advocate for and enact climate justice within their communities. Community networks were distinguished from advocacy networks in the activity. However, the facilitators explained that they may overlap and are both sources of collective care and action.

Participants identified *advocacy networks,* including schools, local councils and local groups, youth and cultural service providers, centres, NGOs, committees, advisory groups, the leadership programs within them, and their senior leadership or staff. Young co-researcher Li (pseudonym) explained that their local government youth advisory did not provide opportunities for relationship building, making it difficult to connect with peers, express vulnerability, or influence the agenda and power structures. Sporting, recreational, land care, and community gardens were also identified as opportunities for community-based climate justice. Notably, few CMOs or adult organisers were mapped, only CJU, local school strike chapters, and the local Extinction Rebellion group.

Participants also identified *community networks, including school, social, familial, health care, recreational and sporting spaces,* which offered young people well-being support. Young people realised that these networks can also be opportune places for climate justice organising. Young co-researcher Harriet said they realised that 'you can do what you love and you can bring advocacy into that. It doesn't have to be one or the other, you can combine the two and you can bring the change that needs to happen into the area that you're interested in'.

Reflection

The young co-researchers' exploration of collective action and care highlights the importance of collective care in activist education. As illustrated in Figure 3, collective care praxis brings emotional and mental well-being into the remit of activist training so that activists can learn to engage with their climate emotions, realise the importance of care and connection to sustain

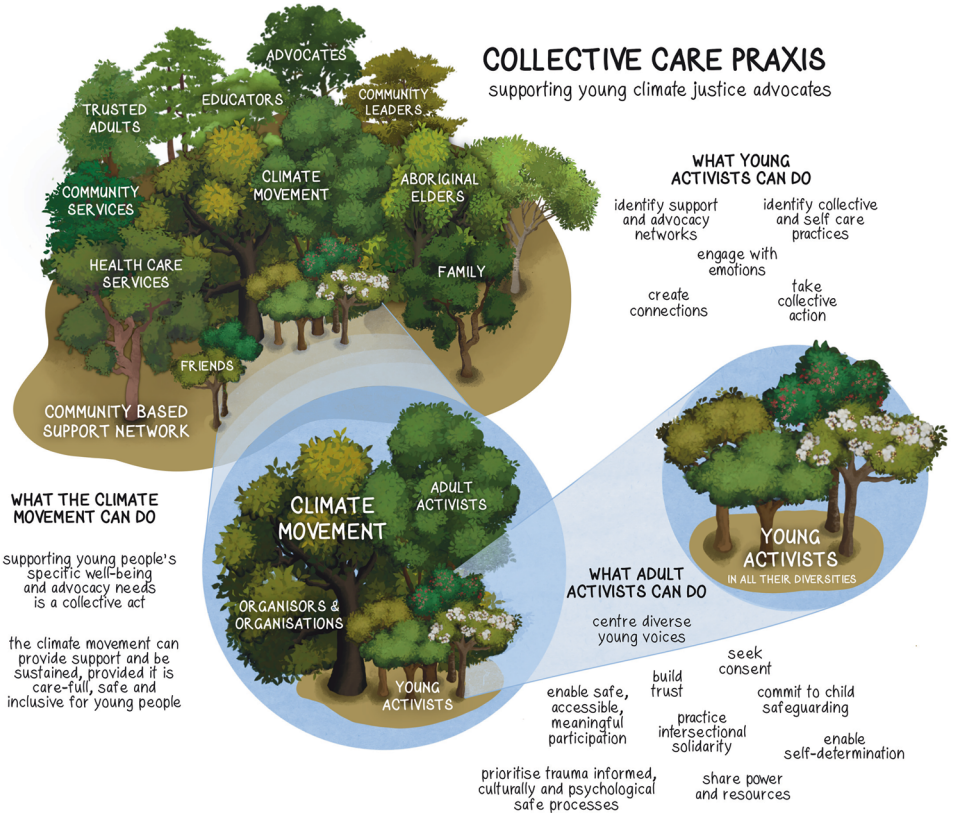

Figure 3. A Conceptual illustration of our collective care praxis using the visual metaphor of a healthy Forest, made stronger with diverse species and a multi-layered canopy that makes space for new growth. Illustration by Sarah Davies and Kylie Wrigley.

action (Bond et al. 2020; Verlie 2021). Furthermore, it helps young people to identify networks through which activists and their peers can be supported. However, CMOs were not widely recognised as a source of support by young co-researchers and some expressed feeling overwhelmed by the idea of collectivist action and care practices. While the inquiry did not examine the reasons for this (they were, after all, attending CJU's training program), we suspect several explanations exist. First, young people may not yet have exposure to diverse theories of change or types of collective action (outside of highly visible protest). Second, few Australian and international CMOs have programmes and staff in WA, and the CMOs and environmental NGOs based in WA have limited opportunities or resources for young people interested in climate justice. However, as young co-author, Shelby, said, 'Young people shouldn't be excluded from climate action; they should be actively engaged with and upskilled by/with adults to better develop their climate action capabilities'. Next, we discuss how the adult co-researchers applied collective care to develop practices for organisers and activist educators that might help foster more care-full climate movements for young people and their communities to engage with.

Care-full practices for climate organisers working with young activists

Through the program, adults developed three practices to support the young climate justice advocates: responding to intersectionality with active solidarity, child safeguarding, and building care-full community coalitions. The adult co-researchers developed these practices through the

program's delivery and with contributions and endorsements from young people during its co-design and evaluation. Also enacting the 'nothing about us without us' mantra, the young co-authors of this article have further developed and verified these practices; their contributions are quoted herein to privilege their voices.

Responding to intersectionality with active solidarity

CJU's training program took an intersectional approach to climate justice organising and how to support young people in all their diversities to be effective and well advocates. For example, in this study, age is not the sole focus for analysis as youth is not a heterogeneous group; young activists are differently affected by the intersection of generational inequity and other power structures (Bowman 2020). Young people's experiences highlight how class, regionality, and disability affect access to climate action, activism spaces, and mental health support, as well as racial and cultural factors in how settler-colonists, migrants and Indigenous people may understand action and care differently. Thus, to transform the exclusionary, tokenistic, or unsafe processes in climate movements, we argue that mainstream CMOs would benefit from a greater understanding of intersectional climate justice and how adultism intersects with other oppressive systems of power.

Furthermore, intersectionality informs 'active solidarity'; in other words, how we are to enact intersectional solidarity and confront power (Einwohner et al. 2021). For example, adults enacted intersectional solidarity in multiple ways during the program. A diverse youth co-design team was recruited to ensure transparent and shared decision-making and to enact participatory justice. Demographic and accessibility questions were asked upon enrolment to the program to inform how adults could enhance equity (through internet and computer access) and create culturally and psychologically safe conditions for each individual's participation (such as identifying appropriate mentors, mental health resources and service providers for non-binary, Aboriginal, or rural participants). Furthermore, speakers and guests with diverse lived experiences and careers were invited to illustrate a variety of advocacy career pathways.

Co-authors and experienced youth activists agreed that CMOs must take an intersectional approach when engaging with young people, highlighting age-related power dynamics as just one of many factors affecting their participation and safety in climate movements. Emma and Hannah highlighted that adult activist culture can be exclusionary for young people, noting that older activists often organise informal debriefs and social events late at night involving alcohol consumption. Hannah said, 'I feel like it's so easy to bring children into unsafe places (bars, etc) when the majority are 18 or over. I've found that I haven't even been listened to when I say 'Hey! I can't do that', but our voices are easily drowned out'. Adult activists can be more attuned to how they may exclude young people and other groups by seeking to create more inclusive and accessible support networks in response to a diversity of activist needs and preferences. Furthermore, Caleb acknowledged that young people relate to each other differently than they do with adults, highlighting that formal and professional interactions between adults and youth might not foster supportive relationships. Young people must be allowed to co-design support structures to suit their needs and preferences rather than be assimilated into adultist norms. CMOs must also share resources and power with young people to organise their own collective care and activist practices.

Child safeguarding

While unique experiences and leadership of young activists strengthen climate movements, the co-mingling of adults and children through activism is not without risks (Pereznieto, Rivett, and Marcus 2020). To safeguard children, CJU's program developed processes for parental and

guardian co-consent, grooming prevention policies for online communication between over and under 18s and rolled out training for sexual assault disclosures and trauma-informed practice to adults involved. These processes were explained to young co-researchers, their parents and guardians to foster transparency and trust.

Young co-authors agreed that child safeguarding by CMOs is necessary. Hannah argued that 'if someone feels at risk or undervalued, then there's a really good chance they will just disengage… Child safeguarding is a major factor that empowers young people; removing those barriers in adult-led systems [helps address] the issue [of disempowerment]'. Emma elaborated that safeguarding policies must be empowering, not exclusionary: 'I've been involved in activism spaces since I was 13, but it's been disempowering when I haven't been able to do the same thing that adults or older people are doing because for no valid reason, we don't have an *empowering* policy, it just says no under 18s.' Emma further troubled the rigid binary of adult/child and calls for more nuanced and transparent safeguarding policies co-designed with young people.

Building care-full community coalitions

While adult climate organisers can build their capacity and commitment to active intersectional solidarity and child safeguarding, we suggest that supporting young people's specific well-being and advocacy needs is a collective act. First, we suggest CMOs engage strategically with young people and their support networks, including healthcare service providers, families, and educators, to build coalitions for youth action and care. Although there are limitations to the dominant Western psychological model of individual resilience building to cope with climate distress (Kałwak and Weihgold 2022), we do not suggest that collective action or untrained climate organisers could replace treatment for acute mental health challenges that climate distress can cause or exacerbate (Fava, Gao, and Baker 2023). Furthermore, CMOs have a duty to build relationships with child activists, parents, guardians or trusted adults. This can occur through in-school training, family-friendly events and activities, and training programs, such as CJU's.

Illustrating practices that build care-full communities, CJU's training program used a co-consent process for participants under 16 to ensure that organisers had spoken with their parents/guardians. Organisers consulted with youth and mental health service providers who, in return, enhanced their climate justice literacy and understanding of climate distress. Adult co-researchers who facilitated the programs were also trained in mental health first aid, trauma-informed practice, and how to receive assault disclosures.

Secondly, intergenerational networks are essential for dismantling care-less and oppressive power structures that adult climate movements unwittingly reproduce and uphold, building more care-full and just movements in their place. Young people's perspectives, experiences and agency are imperative for prefiguring alternative ways of being and organising change (Bowman 2020; Laroque, 2023; Pickard 2022; Ritchie 2021). This means that some adults may be required to unlearn and redistribute power to make way for plural ways of knowing and deep, equitable participation (Newell et al. 2021). Similarly, there are opportunities for young people to learn, with humility and reverence, from historic and ongoing struggles for justice.

Reflection

Collective care offers a way of thinking about adult climate organisers' and CMOs' duty of care to young people and how climate movements can contribute to young people's multi-layered support networks. The practices discussed above and in Figure 3 demonstrate how adults and young activists can work together to identify opportunities for more care-full, safe and inclusive climate movements capable of supporting young people concerned about climate change and

justice issues. Thus, while organisers and activist educators may find the training program and practices discussed here useful, they may not be appropriate in other contexts. Young people and their communities must be engaged in co-creating place-based supports that are responsive to their diverse needs and experiences (Elsen and Ord 2021; Godden et al. 2021). In partnership, we recommend that collective care praxis be used to critically reflect on carelessness that may occur in CMOs and inform the creation of other training programs, policies and ways of supporting young people.

Conclusion

This article has recognised that adult climate organisers can contribute to young people's multi-layered support networks and have a duty of care to young people engaging in the movement. Failure to foster safe and care-full movements that support young activists' efficacy and well-being may lead them to disengage from activism and exacerbate climate distress. Thus, it is necessary to understand how adults can support youth activism in mutually beneficial and empowering ways (Elsen and Ord 2021). Collective care praxis offers organisers a transformative opportunity to prefigure care-full and just climate movements. By centring young people's voices and concerns and then sharing decision-making power and resources with them, the movement might begin dismantling the care-less legacies of inequity and injustice that it risks reproducing. Furthermore, this research demonstrates how CMOs stand to gain from the many critical insights young people offer the movement and the agency they have in their communities.

Our PAR methodology makes an important contribution to the literature where participatory research in youth climate activism is scarce (Neas, Ward, and Bowman 2022). While this article concerns intergenerational learning and supporting young people, further research might apply collective care across various contexts. Collective care not only stands to benefit the movement's young participants; it contributes to caring for everything (Nannup 2006), including other communities marginalised from climate action and the social, ecological and atmospheric systems that climate justice seeks to repair. There are ample opportunities for enhancing intersectional solidarity between other groups of activists and educators, for example, to foster more climate and environmental movements that are trauma-informed, culturally and psychologically safe for historically marginalised groups to participate in.

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Authors' contributions

Investigation, Data Curation, Writing (Original Draft): Kylie Wrigley; Conceptualization, Methodology: Georgia Beardman, Jaime Yallup Farrant, Kylie Wrigley; Validation/Verification: Caleb Faulkner Hill, Emma Heyink, Eva Carrot Collins, Hannah Davies, and Shelby Robinson; Writing (reviewing and editing): Naomi Joy Godden and Georgia Beardman; Supervision: Naomi Joy Godden. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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