



**RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE: Supporting people to cope with difficult emotions, find their way to life-affirming action, and engage the imagination with generative possibilities.**

In Australia the devastation wrought by catastrophic bushfires, extended drought and the pandemic has moved the climate emergency into our daily lives. We are now at a crossroads, with ecological breakdown threatening personal, societal and planetary wellbeing, and an unprecedented opportunity to restore a more respectful and balanced way of living.

Escalating threats and consequences for future generations can provoke complex emotions such as fear, anxiety, grief, despair and shame, and raise fundamental questions about who we are in our world and how to respond to what we are facing. These are understandable responses and healthy alternatives to numbing and denial, suggestive of deep caring and empathy for each other, for the next generations, and for Earth.

Therapists have a key role to provide safe and compassionate spaces, engaging our skills for working with complex behaviours and states of mind. We can support people to face, feel and cope with challenging emotions, and to do so in a way that they don't become overwhelmed and disabled by them, or avoid facing the problems in order to avoid the feelings.

In this context therapeutic work means more than just helping people to cope with difficult emotions; it also includes supporting them to find their way to life-affirming action and to engage the imagination with generative possibilities. This can help to untangle cultural conditioning, relieve existential despair, inform realistic hope, and shape generative ways of living and relating.

**Learning objectives of this training:**

- Awareness of the wide-ranging impacts of the climate emergency on mental health.
- Insight into how the climate emergency is being encountered in therapeutic contexts
- Explore key considerations and practical strategies for offering effective therapeutic support
- Identify protective factors and generative responses for these times.

**Trainer:**

**Merle Conyer** supports individuals, teams, organisations and communities responding to interpersonal, institutional, political, cultural and environmental trauma, healing and justice.

Contexts in which she contributes include mental health, legal, government, academic and community sectors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, organisations facilitating redress for institutional abuse, and those contributing to human rights, social justice and environmental justice.

Her track record includes board, management, service delivery and volunteer roles. Through her independent practice she currently offers counselling, supervision, debriefing, training, groupwork, wellbeing support and consulting services. She interweaves interdisciplinary wisdoms such as somatic psychotherapy, trauma-informed practice, narrative therapy, ecological psychotherapy, focusing and mindfulness practices, and is guided by both clinical and cultural supervision.

Merle is an Accredited Supervisor and Clinical Member with the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia. She holds a Master of Narrative Therapy and Community Work, Master of Counselling and Applied Psychotherapy, Master of Education, Graduate Diploma of Communication Management (Human Resources Development) and Diplomas of Somatic Psychotherapy and Energetic Healing.

**N.B.** This training may qualify for Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) CPD. Please refer to the Dept. of Health <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-ba-focus#cpd> for more information.

A CPD certificate for 6 hours of training is issued in the week following attendance at this event.

Our continuing professional development events meet the quality standard recognised by many relevant professional associations including psychology, social work, occupational therapy, mental health nursing, community work, counselling, psychotherapy and more.

*We recommend checking with your association for the correct calculation of points for this event.*

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