

# Climate Change and Mental Health

- Primary resource referenced in various mental health publications: [Climate Psychology Alliance \(climatepsychologyalliance.org\)](https://climatepsychologyalliance.org), including a [FAQ on Climate Anxiety](#)
- Yale University Site: [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#) (including recent surveys about mental health and climate change).

## How climate change is affecting mental health and decision making:

- From the survey noted above (Yale University):
  - 70% of Americans are now “very or somewhat” worried about global warming and showing signs of anxiety or depression as a result of that worry
  - 50% of Americans are planning to have fewer children and one of the key reasons stated was their “fear around climate change.”
- Changes in mental health terminology/trends related to climate change: The term “pre-PTSD,” i.e., a trauma that has not already occurred. It's a fear of a future trauma (involving anxiety and depression). This term is now applied frequently to climate change.
- In the last five years, a significant increase in climate change/global warming anxiety as clients’ PRIMARY presenting concern in therapy.

## Recommendations/Resources:

- Reconnecting with nature in the present by going (or even imagining going) to the woods, beach, etc. to see the positive in the environment.
- Online support groups/chats such as Climate Change Cafes where persons can talk about difficult feelings in a safe space held by trained facilitators. To register to attend a Climate Change Café event, go to [Climate Psychology Alliance Events | Eventbrite](#)
- The Climate Psychology Alliance has trained professionals who offer up to three free sessions of therapeutic support (generally by phone) for students, scientists, parents, climate advocates, etc. Go to: [Individual Therapeutic Support](#)
- For a list of U.S. and Canadian climate-aware therapists: [Climate Therapist Directory — Climate Psychology Alliance North America](#) Note: this directory is in its early stages.

- Therapists with an interest in serving this therapy concern can register here: [Become A Climate-Aware Therapist — Climate Psychology Alliance North America](#).
- Non-urgent emotional support for climate change mental health issues can be found at: [Resources for Working with Climate Emotions](#), [All We Can Save Project](#), and [Gen Dred](#) (an email sign up).

### Excerpts from Articles with Helpful Coping Information:

- [Time: How Psychology Can Help Fight Climate Change—And Climate Anxiety](#) (August 2022)
  - References confronting the mental health toll of climate change, how to fight climate change denial, how to empower people to fight climate change, and how to take action.
- [NPR: Climate Change Anxiety Is Real. Here's How You Can Manage Those Feelings](#) (April 2022)
  - Read or listen to audio
  - Interview with Phoenix Smith, an ecotherapist
  - Highlights: Letting yourself feel the feelings, a way to reset and calm your nervous system, talking to others, and channeling feelings to connect with others.
- [Smithsonian: Your Crushing Anxiety About the Climate Crisis is Normal](#) (May 2022)
  - Britt Wray, a Stanford researcher and author of the book *Generation Dread*, shares what she's learned about the ways climate change affects mental health and offers practical advice.
- [Climate Central: Climate Change and Mental Health](#) (May 2022)
  - Includes key concepts of climate change risks to mental health, statistics, information on widespread climate anxiety
  - Graphs, charts and resources
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\): Why Mental Health Is a Priority for Action on Climate Change](#) (June 2022)
  - The Organization is urging countries to include mental health support in their response to the climate crisis.
  - Cites examples where some pioneering countries have effectively done so.

- [\*American Psychiatric Association: How Extreme Weather Events Affect Mental Health\*](#)
  - Provides additional resources with links, including:
  - [\*Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance\*](#) – American Psychological Association and eco-America
  
- [\*CNBC: Climate Change Hopelessness Is a Real Condition—These Experts Have Advice on How to Cope\*](#) (June 2022)
  - Features Portland, Oregon-based environmental psychologist Thomas Doherty, who specializes in the intersection of psychology and environmental science
  
- [\*The Iberdola Group \(blog/global energy leader\): Eco-anxiety: The Psychological Aftermath of the Climate Crisis\*](#)
  - Reviews “eco-anxiety”-- what it is, what causes it, what its symptoms are and what we can do to avoid it while taking care of the planet.
  
- [\*Mental Health UK: What Is Climate Anxiety and What Can You Do About It?\*](#) (2021)
  - Provides a video with a cognitive behavioral coping technique
  
- [\*Healthline: Climate Change Is Affecting Mental Health—Here’s What You Can Do About It\*](#) (April 2021)
  - Provides overview of immediate and graduate effects
  - Thoughts on how to cope, including acknowledging your feelings, encouraging children to talk about their feelings, making a safety plan, getting involved in the community, knowing your triggers, taking breaks to avoid burnout, and seeking out mental health professionals.
  
- [\*Nature: Young People’s Climate Anxiety Revealed in Landmark Survey\*](#) (September 2021)
  - Cites a survey—the largest of its kind—asking 10,000 young people in 10 countries how they felt about climate change.
  
- [\*Counseling Today/American Counseling Association: Climate in Crisis: Counselors Needed\*](#) (August 2020)
  - Creation of the ACA Climate Task Force
  - Implications for counselors
  - Climate change in correlation with social justice
  
- [\*Resilience: Apocalypse Fatigue, Selective Inattention, and Fatalism: The Psychology of Climate Change\*](#) (January 2020)
  - Available as an audiofile

- Highlighting the phenomenon of “apocalypse fatigue”
- [\*AGU Earth and Space Science: The Emotional Toll of Climate Change on Science Professionals\*](#) (December 2019)
  - Information on the consequence of sustained stress
  - Psychological self-care practice
  - Recommended institutional cultural change
- [\*International Journal of Mental Health Systems: Climate Change and Mental Health: Risks, Impacts and Priority Actions\*](#) (June 2018)
  - Full text
  - Provides an overview of the current and projected climate change risks and impacts to mental health and provides recommendations for priority actions to address the mental health consequences of climate change.