

Exploring Climate Change, Mental Health and Wellbeing



Illustration by Alexandra Bowman

What does mental health and wellbeing mean?

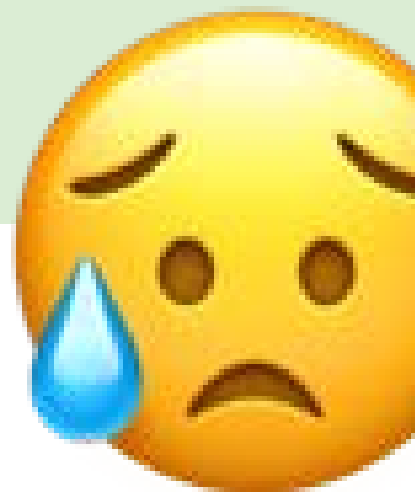


Non-positive responses to climate change are not innately pathological or unhealthy. They are a **NORMAL** response to difficult and challenging issues and experiences.

Mental health is also **MORE** than an absence of negative experiences or disease. It includes **POSITIVE** ongoing experiences of physical, mental, emotional, place-based, holistic wellbeing.



What are some common climate mental health and wellbeing impacts?



Climate change is impacting individual and community mental health and wellbeing. Heatwaves, flooding, forest fires, air pollution, drought, and extreme weather events are directly and indirectly increasing adverse mental health and community wellbeing.

Stress

Eco-Anxiety

Eco-Grief

Solastalgia

PTSD

Anger

Loneliness

Depression

Substance misuse

Aggression

Violence

Sense of helplessness



**Don't worry, you aren't alone in
feeling these things!**

Such feelings can be part of a
normal response to witnessing
and experiencing climate
change-related events and
trauma.



What is eco-anxiety, eco-grief, and solastalgia more specifically?

Eco-anxiety: a state of ongoing fear, stress, or worry resulting from climate impacts and processes. Even if we have been lucky to avoid direct climate disaster experiences, we fear we may soon experience it.

Eco-grief: Feelings of grief over the incalculable losses we are experiencing or facing. For example, loss of forests in wildfires, species loss, or ecosystem degradation.

Solastalgia: A kind of emotional or existential distress or grief caused by a sense of loss or profound negative change in one's local environment.



Hope and climate grief are not binary or zero-sum.

It is important we acknowledge our capacity to hold complex feelings of climate or environmental loss, grief or trauma, while also holding hope, joy, and optimism rooted in possibility and potential for community mobilization and collaboration for more just and equitable communities, institutions, and systems.

CLIMATE WELLBEING SERIES

References + Resources

Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance

American Psychological Association

Climate Change and Mental Health: A Systemic Approach to Action in Post-Secondary Education

Jenalee Kluttz

Community Resilience and Wellbeing Amid Climate Crisis
Meghan Wise