



# Ecoanxiety: Key Clinical Points

## Screen & Diagnose:

- Climate distress and ecoanxiety are not pathological or a diagnosis. These feelings in relation to the climate crisis are understandable responses to real threats.
- Presenting symptoms of climate distress and ecoanxiety look like all forms of anxiety; it is an endpoint symptom. Consideration of causative factors is essential for understanding, evaluation, and management.
- Consider and rule out anxiety disorders and major depression, other psychiatric disorders, and medical causes of anxiety.
- Vulnerable individuals include those with pre-existing anxiety, depression, PTSD, or trauma histories, as well as children, adolescents, and young adults.
- Changes to the environment can be triggers and contributors to ecoanxiety.
- Climate distress and ecoanxiety can become a clinically significant problem when feelings become severe, overwhelming, intrusive, and interfere with functioning and come with psychosocial impairments.

## Key Interventions:

### Building host resilience:

- Validate and **normalize feelings**
- Teach **stress reduction** and **copng strategies**
- Teach **breathing techniques** for calming nervous system under acute distress
- Teach **progressive muscle relaxation** techniques
- Encourage **healthy lifestyle**: sleep, exercise, diet
- Encourage exposure to **natural environment**
- Encourage **social engagement** and participation in supportive communities
- Encourage **purposeful activity** including collective action

*\*Coping resources available in QR codes below*

### Improving environments:

- **Manage exposure** to troubling news and environments. It's okay to stay generally informed while not overdoing exposures that are overwhelming.

*Photo credit. Greg Rakozy, Unsplash*

## Resources:



Coping toolkit



Apps to manage anxiety