

What do we need to know about climate change?

Firstly: do we talk about *climate crisis*, *climate change* or *global warming*?

Each of these terms describes parts of the same problem: significant and lasting changes in the Earth's climate, particularly related temperature, precipitation, and weather patterns.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), made up of 782 scientists from around the world, has concluded that global warming is real and is clearly caused by human activities. These activities include burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes, which raise greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere. Despite rising temperatures, the world is not successfully reducing emissions (IPCC, 2023).

Watch the video

“Climate change in 60 seconds”:

youtu.be/n4e5UPu1co0?si=i8DqvWilhwuEnNC5

What is there to be concerned about in the climate crisis?

Climate change impacts are seen throughout every aspect of the world we live in. The impacts of climate change on different parts of society are interconnected (NOAA. 2021).

Societal consequences:

- + Food shortages
- + Energy poverty
- + Increasing overall poverty
- + Climate refugees
- + Mental health crisis
- + Wars over resources
- + Impacts on health (extreme heat, allergies, diseases etc)
- + Global pandemics

Watch this video about

the impact of climate change on society:

youtu.be/2nqn71TqkA?si=geHvqdsMxc8ut4xm

Environmental consequences:

- + Rising temperatures
- + Heat waves
- + Droughts and wildfires
- + Extreme weather events
- + Sea-level rise in coastal areas, floods
- + Biodiversity loss
- + Impacts on marine environment
- + Soil erosion and degradation
- + Lack of clean/fresh water

Inequality

To better understand how climate change affects different groups globally and the various factors influencing youth climate anxiety, it's important to recognize that some groups will experience greater impacts than others.

Climate change has always been an equality problem. It is important to understand that the climate crisis is already affecting people around the world: marginalised groups such as low-income people, indigenous communities, and those excluded because of race, sexuality, language or socio-economic background will be much more affected than others. People with less financial means in general will be more affected than the wealthier population. (Pratt & Folver, 2022)

The main inequalities are:

- **Economic:** Marginalised groups are often more exposed to extreme weather conditions and have fewer resources to adapt to climate change.
- **Racial:** Pollution, natural disasters, and poisoned resources are distributed unequally in society, with marginalised groups experiencing it disproportionately harder.
- **Regional:** Different continents have different amounts of responsibility when it comes to climate change, and some regions should take more responsibility whereas others should be supported in responding to the impacts.
- **Generational:** The mental health of young people will decline due to uncertainty of the future in a rapidly changing environment causing more stress, anxiety and other mental health problems. Additionally, the impacts of climate-related disasters and the loss of natural spaces can lead to feelings of helplessness and grief, worsening their mental health challenges. In countries where young people rely on agriculture for their income, extreme climate patterns will affect their livelihoods, and they will face the costs of climate change during their lives.

Be aware that most likely you are W.E.I.R.D – Western Educated Industrialised Rich Democratic – and 90% of the world population is not.

Read more about this in the handbook chapter “Climate change doesn’t affect everyone equally” and the following article about climate change making injustices bigger:
vienna.impacthub.net/social-impact-of-climate-change-social-injustices/

Climate change awareness profiles

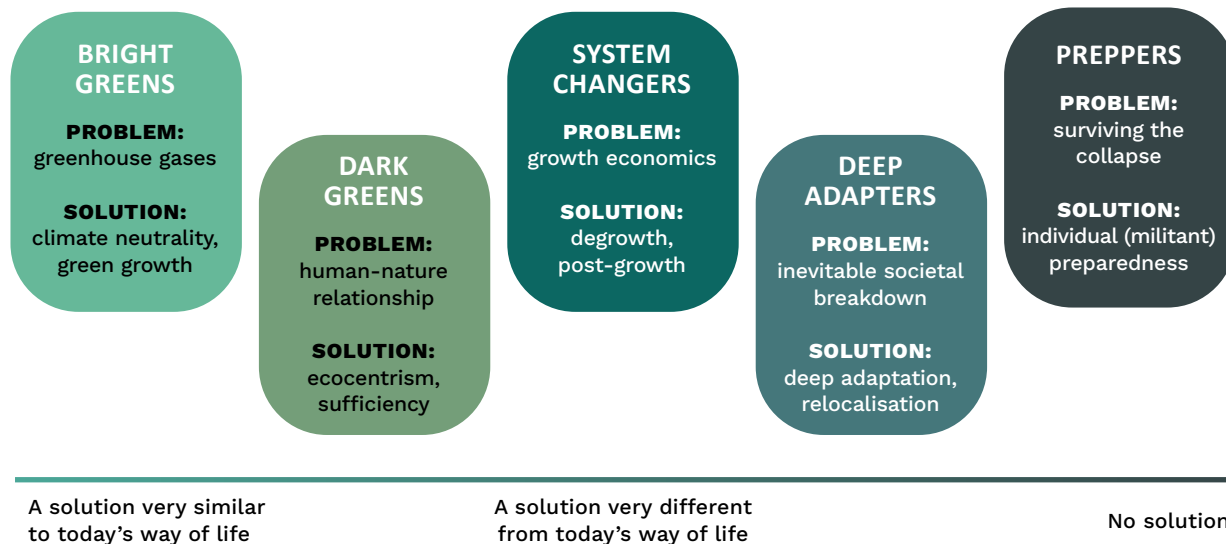
When you think about your own opinion about climate change solutions, do you think there is a solution very similar to today’s way of life, a solution very different to today’s way of life or no solution? There is a spectrum of answers among people experiencing climate anxiety. According to this answer, Estonian psychologist and environmentalist Madis Vasser (PhD) has put together 5 types of climate change awareness profiles. Have a look at the table below.

When a young person experiences climate anxiety, their views and beliefs can vary widely. Understanding these different perspectives is important, as it helps you to recognize that people experience climate anxiety in unique ways based on what they see as the main problems and solutions. When a young person reaches out to you for support, it doesn’t matter what climate awareness profile they fall under and it should not impact on how you respond. Your support should always be consistent and empathetic, regardless of their background or beliefs.

References

- IPCC, 2023: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>
- NOAA, 2021. Climate change impacts. <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/climate/climate-change-impacts>
- Pratt A., Dr. Fowler T. (2022) Deconstructing Bias: Marginalization. Eunice Kennedy Shiver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. NICHD Connection newsletter. Volume 13. Issue 145. <https://science.nichd.nih.gov/confluence/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=242975243>

Climate Change Adaptation Profiles



When a young person experiences climate anxiety, their perspectives and beliefs may fall into some of these profiles. Although it doesn’t matter when you support and help to relieve the suffering, just being aware of these perspectives helps you to have a wider understanding of how in the climate anxiety spectrum people can experience it very differently depending on what they view as the biggest problems and solutions.



Coping with Climate Anxiety Learning Methods for the Mental Health of the European Youth



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