



# What is climate anxiety, and how should you deal with it?

**Climate anxiety is a genuine and growing concern for many people. It can be challenging to know how to cope with climate anxiety. Still, it's essential to seek help if you're feeling overwhelmed. If this sounds like you, here are some helpful management tips.**

## What is climate anxiety?

Climate anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry, or dread about the state of the environment. It's often accompanied by a sense of powerlessness or hopelessness. Climate anxiety can be triggered by news stories, images, and first-hand experiences of climate change. It's a physical response to the knowledge that climate change is happening and will have devastating consequences for our planet.

## How does climate affect mental health?

The effects of climate change are already being felt by people around the world. And as the climate continues to change, we can expect to see more impacts on our mental health. Some of the ways climate change can affect mental health include:

- **Triggering anxiety and depression**
- **Increasing stress levels**
- **Causing sleep problems**
- **Contributing to substance abuse**
- **Worsening existing mental health conditions**

## How common is climate anxiety?

Climate anxiety appears to be a growing problem. A survey conducted in 2019 found that 61% of Americans were worried about climate change, up from 52% in 2015. The number of people who reported feeling "angry" or "hopeless" about climate change also increased during this period. Climate anxiety appears to be more common among young people, with 70% of millennials reporting climate anxiety in a 2019 survey. Climate anxiety can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health.

## Who is most affected by climate anxiety?

Climate anxiety affects people of all ages, but it is widespread among young people. This may be because young people are more likely to be engaged with the issue of climate change and have a greater understanding of the science behind it. Additionally, young people are often more uncertain about the future and feel more powerless to make a change.

## Is climate anxiety a mental illness?

There is no definitive answer to this question. Climate anxiety is not currently recognised as a mental disorder. However, climate anxiety can be a symptom of other mental disorders, such as anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If you're experiencing climate anxiety, it's essential to seek help from a mental health professional. They can assess your symptoms and provide you with the necessary treatment.

## How should you deal with climate anxiety?

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is an effective treatment for climate anxiety. CBT can help you manage your thoughts and feelings about climate change. You'll also learn coping strategies to deal with difficult situations.

Start by acknowledging your climate anxiety. Recognising that you're anxious about climate change can be a helpful first step. Once you've acknowledged your anxiety, you can start to work on managing it. If you're unsure where to start, consider talking to a mental health professional. They can help you develop the right treatment plan.

**Be Practical:** Anxiety often stems from worries about the far-off future – focus on the present and see what short-term changes you can make.

**Talk it out:** Speak to someone who will understand and can offer helpful advice.

**Create a support network:** Find others who are also worried about climate change and build a support system.

**Educate yourself:** Learn as much as possible about climate change to develop a realistic understanding of the situation.

**Find your peace:** Consider yoga, meditation, or nature walks as a way to calm your mind.

**Take action:** Get involved in climate-friendly initiatives and make your voice heard. Join a group or campaign that is working towards climate change solutions.

**Seek professional help:** If your anxiety is proving too much to handle, seek help from a mental health professional.

## Contact us

Above all, remember that you are not alone in feeling climate anxiety. Many people are struggling with the same fears and concerns. Validium understands the challenges of living with climate anxiety and offers expert mental health support through your employer.

