

# Nature-friendly CAMHS: How do nature and climate impact our delivery of quality services in challenging times

Dr Catriona Mellor, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, RCPsych Planetary Health and Sustainability Committee

Catriona.mellor@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

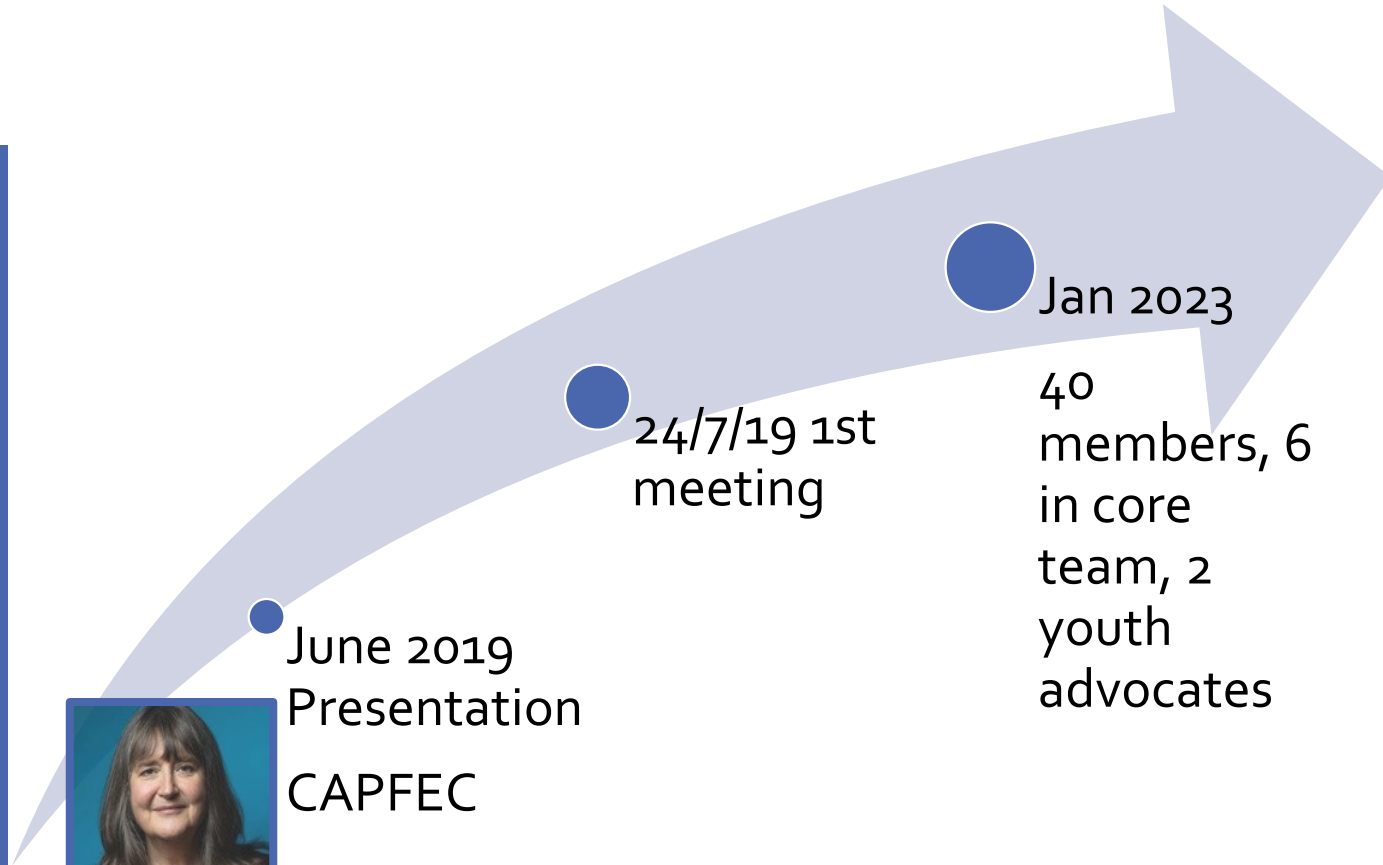


# EcoCAMHS



## SCOPE

MH impacts  
of CEE on CYP  
*and*  
Nature's Role  
in CAMHS



[Become a psychiatrist](#) [Training](#) [Members](#) [Events](#) [Improving care](#) [Mental health](#)

[Home](#) [Improving care](#) [Sustainability and mental health](#) [Sustainability resources](#) [The eco-crisis and CAMHS resources](#)

## The eco-crisis and CAMHS resources



Grief  
Anger  
Rage  
Fear  
Determination



Connection  
Enjoyment  
Calm  
Vitality  
Love



# Overview:

- Climate crisis impact on CYP MH
  - What it feels like to be living at these times (Eco anxiety or distress)
- Scale and complexity of the issues
  - Interconnected issues
  - Nature – climate – inequalities
- Potential responses from CAMHS
  - Environmentally sustainable services
  - Preparing services for climate changed future
  - Learning from a nature-based perspective
- Q&A
- Resources: support for eco distress

Increased Global Temperatures

# Impact of Climate Crisis on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing



Vulnerability multiplier

Exacerbates injustice

Indirect



Longer term direct impacts

Immediate direct impacts

Solastalgia, Climate Grief, Eco Anxiety (eco distress)

Acute stress, Substance abuse  
Suicide  
Insomnia, Grief and Loss  
Anxiety and Depression  
Worsened wellbeing

# Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey

Caroline Hickman, MSc  <sup>†</sup>  • Elizabeth Marks, ClinPsyD <sup>†</sup> • Panu Pihkala, PhD • Prof Susan Clayton, PhD • R Eric Lewandowski, PhD • Elouise E Mayall, BSc • Britt Wray, PhD • Catriona Mellor, MBChB • Lise van Susteren, MD •



Distress and anxiety associated with:

eco-crisis itself, not being able to talk about it AND witnessing government inaction

## Eco distress for children and young people

This information resource is for children and young people, their parents, carers, teachers and other people who might support them. It looks at eco distress, what actions you can take to look after yourself and how you can get more help.

Overarching Threat

Indirect

LT direct

ST direct

Eco-crisis impact  
on MH

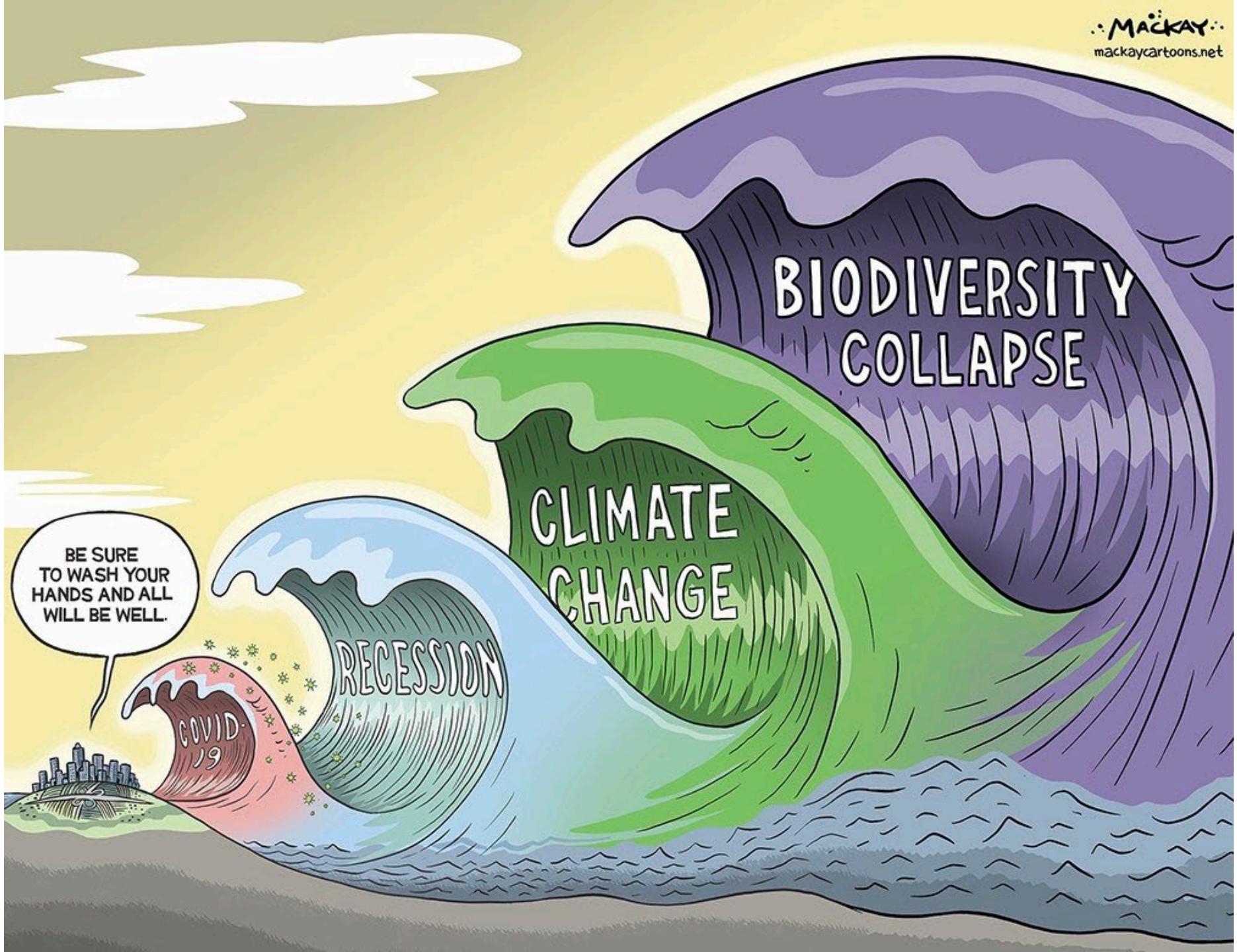
- ❖ Systemic not individual
- ❖ It's NOT: mental illness or diagnosis
- ❖ It's healthy to be frightened in a crisis
- ❖ It makes sense and can teach and motivate us
  - ❖ A final warning call for our species?
- ❖ Reframe as Eco-understanding or Eco-empathy?



Eco distress







BE SURE  
TO WASH YOUR  
HANDS AND ALL  
WILL BE WELL.

COVID-19

RECESSION

CLIMATE  
CHANGE

BIODIVERSITY  
COLLAPSE



# INTERACTIONS BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE, PEOPLE AND NATURE

Climate change drives nature loss

Human activities drive climate change

CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural systems help regulate the climate

Climate change affects people

Nature loss drives climate change

Nature-based solutions

Rejuvenation of green and blue places

Our broken human:nature relationship is closely linked to the climate crisis

Human activities drive nature loss

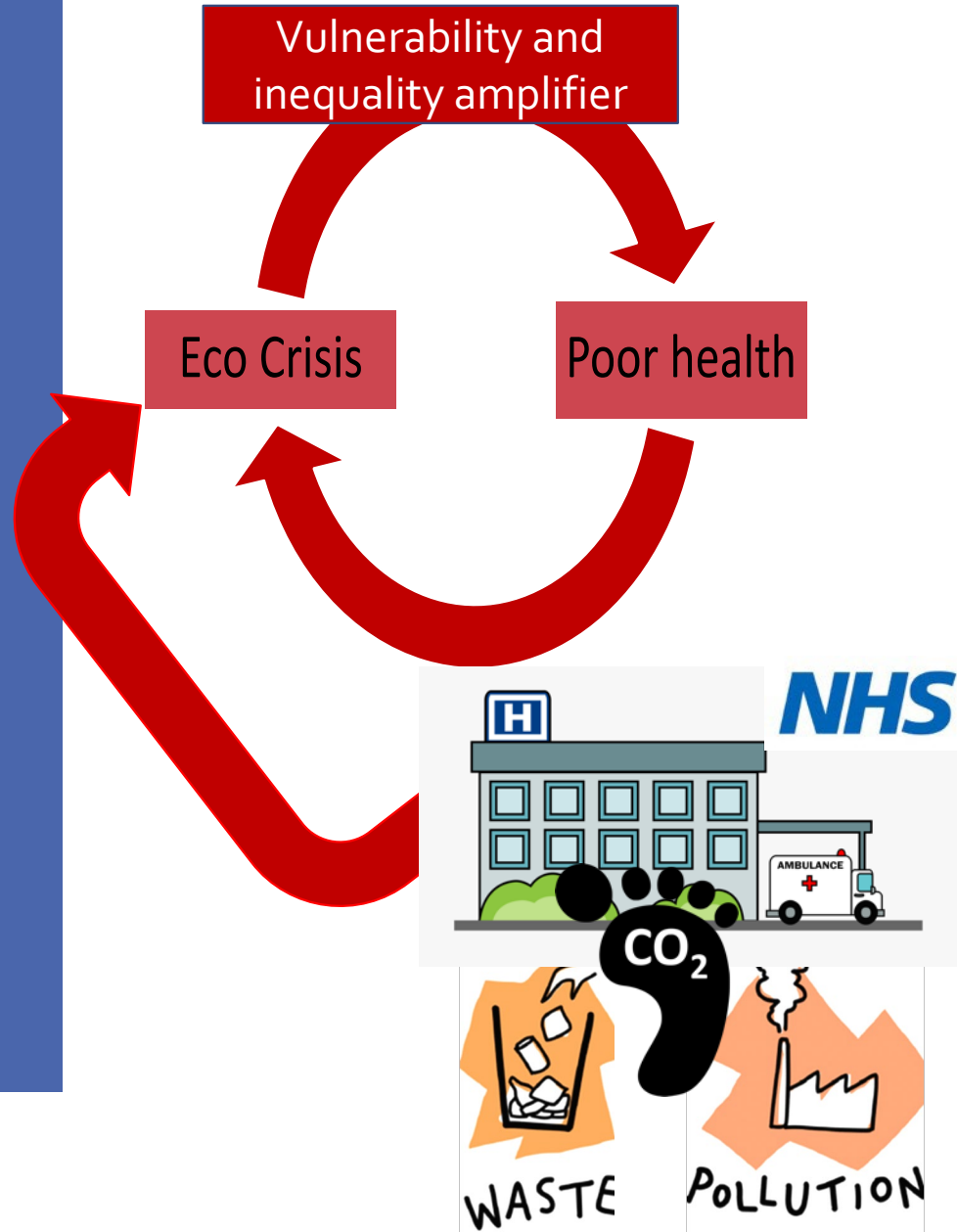
People can protect and restore nature

PEOPLE

NATURE

Contact and connection with nature confer myriad mental and physical health benefits for CYP and nature-based interventions improve health outcomes

Healthy planet  
=  
Healthy people



How does this  
all impact  
CAMHS?

FOR A GREENER **NHS**

MH impacts of CEE  
Nature's role in  
CAMHS

Integration into  
CAMHS via

Supporting  
environmentally  
sustainable services  
- mitigation

Preparing for a  
climate changed  
world - adaptation

Harnessing benefits  
of a nature-based  
approach

# Support environmentally sustainable services

## 1. PREVENTION

Promoting health and preventing disease by tackling the causes of illnesses and inequalities

## 3. LEAN SERVICE DELIVERY

Streamlining care systems to minimise wasteful activities



## 2. PATIENT SELF-CARE

Empowering patients to take a greater role in managing their own health and healthcare

## 4. LOW CARBON ALTERNATIVES

Prioritising treatments and technologies with a lower environmental impact

Mortimer, F. The Sustainable Physician. Clin Med 10(2). April 1, 2010. D110-111.



## The SusQI framework

**SUSTAINABLE  
VALUE**

=

**OUTCOME FOR PATIENTS AND POPULATIONS**

**ENVIRONMENTAL • SOCIAL • FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

(THE 'TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE')



Telehealth

## Connecting With Telehealth to Children in Hospital (CWTCH) project

[CWTCH wins Psychiatric Team of the Year at 2020 RCPsych Awards](#)

Examples of sustainable QI



Sustainable prescribing

- Dr Lynn Brown, Fife CAMHS
- Prescribing checklists



Inspires and supports healthcare sites in transforming their green space for health, wellbeing and biodiversity



# EcoCAMHS top tips for climate, nature and wellbeing

## Learn more about the climate crisis and its impact on mental health

Watch this [short video](#) about the links between climate and mental health

Learn about the climate and ecological emergency as an issue of [health equity](#)

## Keep learning

## Learn how to become a more nature-connected and sustainable practitioner

Book onto a Centre for Sustainable Healthcare [short course](#)

Learn about the evidence base for [nature-based interventions](#)

## Promote sustainable transport

Think about how you travel to work. Can you cycle, walk, take the bus?

Offer support to others to access subsidised or active travel options (for example, bus passes and bike schemes)

## Be active

## Access green and blue spaces

Go for a walk with colleagues in your lunch break or before starting work

Offer to meet with families in green or blue spaces rather than in the clinic – even in urban areas these are often accessible

## Engage in climate conversations

Allow space in your appointments for people to share worries for the planet's health and their future

Discuss with work colleagues and senior management. Identify sustainable and nature-friendly changes to act upon

## Connect

## Connect with nature

Bring nature into your sessions for example through art, photography and poetry

Boost your own nature connection with a forest walk, an outdoor swim, or by sowing seeds

## Take notice of how you are feeling

Give yourself time to acknowledge and process difficult thoughts and feelings that emerge within this field, and talk about it

Ask for support from others, or access programmes such as [Active Hope](#)

Actively seek positive news stories

## Take notice

## Recognise what's going on around us

Take notice of how others are feeling about this issue

Remember the bigger picture – we all have a small part to play, but those with the most power hold the most responsibility

## Encourage volunteering and promote agency

Promote the value for young people of giving time to local nature and community organisations

If appropriate, discuss involvement in environmental activities as a way of channelling anxiety into agency

## Give

## Get more involved

Experience first-hand the impact of practical, hands-on engagement in local nature restoration work – share with others

Join [EcoCAMHS](#) and/or a climate-aware lobbying group and be the change!

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/working-sustainably/sustainability-resources/the-eco-crisis-and-camhs-resources>



mighty  
oaks  
from  
little  
acorns  
grow



# Preparing CAMHS for a climate changed world

- Sustainable and preventative mental health care
  - targeting inequalities and strengthening and empowering communities
- Early warning systems and disaster preparedness
- Training of mental health practitioners and community leaders
  - climate related and post disaster mental health needs
- Psychological support dissemination
  - Eco distress
  - Easily accessible interventions to mitigate secondary stressors
    - high risk groups e.g. fled children and adolescents
  - Can draw on existing psychiatric and psychological expertise
    - promotion of resilience
    - mental health responses following extreme weather events
    - management of trauma-related conditions





## Benefits of a nature-based approach



Bristol University and Bluebell Care (perinatal mental health charity)

## Mother Nature Project

# Green care in first-episode psychosis: short report of a mixed-methods evaluation of a 'woodland group' in an early intervention service

Sharon Cuthbert,<sup>1</sup>  Harriet Sharp,<sup>1</sup> Clio Berry<sup>1,2</sup> 


INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF PSYCHIATRY  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2022.2080530>

 Taylor & Francis  
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

 OPEN ACCESS  Check for updates

## Bringing nature into CAMHS inpatient services: reflections for the implementation and integration of training into practice

David Francis Hunt<sup>a,b</sup> , Mia Morgan<sup>a,b</sup>, Michéal Connors<sup>c</sup> and Catriona Mellor<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Littlemore Mental Health Centre, Oxford, UK; <sup>b</sup>Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, Warneford Hospital, Oxford, UK; <sup>c</sup>The Natural Academy, Bristol, UK

# Summary:

- Climate crisis impact on CYP MH
  - What it feels like to be living at these times (Eco anxiety or distress)
- Scale and complexity of the issues
  - Interconnected issues
  - Nature – climate – inequalities
- Potential responses from CAMHS
  - Environmentally sustainable services
  - Preparing services for climate changed future
  - Learning from a nature-based perspective
- Q&A
- Resources: support for eco distress

*"We need joy as we need air. We need love as we need water. We need each other as we need the earth we share."*

Maya Angelou

Thank you



# Resources

- Eco distress Fact sheet, Royal College Psychiatrists:  
<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/eco-distress---for-young-people>
- Climate Psychology Alliance resources:  
<https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/support>
- Active Hope online: <https://www.activehope.info/free-training>
- Gen Dread and All We Can Save: Resources for working with climate emotions. <https://www.allwecansave.earth/emotions>
- Don't look up - <https://dontlookup.count-us-in.com/step-detail/be-kind-to-your-mind>

Lawrance, E.L., Thompson, R., Newberry Le Vay, J., Page, L., Jennings, N., 2022. The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: A Narrative Review of Current Evidence, and its Implications. *International Review of Psychiatry* 34, 443–498

Hickman C. & Marks E., Pihkala P., Clayton S., Lewandowski E., Mayal E., Wray B., Mellor C., van Susteren L. (2021) A global survey of climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change. Pre-print, *Lancet Planetary Health*

Mental Health and Our Changing Climate, American Psychological Association, Climate for Health, EcoAmerica: <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/mental-health-climate-change.pdf>

Our Planet's Climate and Ecological Emergency. Royal College Psychiatrists Position Statement (2021). Mental Health impacts and Psychological dimensions. [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/position-statements/position-statement-pso3-21-climate-and-ecological-emergencies-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=281fb719\\_8](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/position-statements/position-statement-pso3-21-climate-and-ecological-emergencies-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=281fb719_8)

Clemens V, von Hirschhausen E, Fegert JM. (2020) Report of the IPCC: implications for the mental health policy of children and adolescents in Europe – a scoping review. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01615-3>

Hayes K, Blashki G, Wiseman J, Burke S, Reifels L. (2018) Climate change and mental health: risks, impacts and priority actions. *Int Journal of Mental Health Systems* 12:28

Burke S, Sanson A, Van Hoorn J. (2018) The Psychological Effects of Climate Change on Children. *Current Psychiatry Reports* 20:35

## REFERENCES

Climate anxiety and MH impacts of eco crisis



Richardson M, Sheffield D, Harvery C, Petronzi D (2015). The Impact of Children's connection to Nature. A report for the RSPB, available from <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/positions/education/the-impact-of-childrens-connection-to-nature.pdf>

Bratman G, Anderson C, Berman M, Cochran B, de Vries S, Flanders J, Folke C, Frumkin H et al (2019) Nature and mental health: an ecosystem service perspective. *Sci Advan* 5: eaax0903

Engemann K, Pedersen C, Arge L, Tsirogiannis C, Mortensen P, Svenning J (2019). Residential green space in childhood is associated with lower risk of psychiatric disorders from adolescence into adulthood. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (11)

Rook G. (2013) Regulation of the immune system by biodiversity from the natural environment; an ecosystem essential to health. *PNAS* 10 (46)

Cooley, S., Jones, C., Kurtz, A., and Robertson, N. (2020) 'Into the Wild: a meta-synthesis of talking therapy in natural outdoor spaces. *Clinical Psychology Review* 77:101841

Roszak T., Gomes, M and Kanner, A (1995) *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*. Crown Publishers

Richardson, M., & Hamlin I., (2021) Nature engagement for human and nature's well-being during the Corona pandemic. *Journal of Public Mental Health* 20 (2)

Lumber, R., Richardson, M., Sheffield, D. (2017) Beyond knowing nature: Contact, emotion, compassion, meaning and beauty are pathways to nature connection. *PLoS ONE* 12(5):e0177186.

Lovell, R (2014) Natural England Access to Evidence Notes. Links between natural environments and Mental Health (FINo18) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6159558569261408>

## REFERENCES

Nature and Health