

# A Greener CAMHS

## Child and Adolescent Mental Health and The Natural World



### **BACKGROUND**

The Climate and Ecological Crisis is a Health Crisis. It has direct and indirect impacts on the mental health of children and young people.

Children and Young People have been taking to the streets to demand climate action. Eco-anxiety has become a common phrase on social media.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has a newly formed Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee and aims to be a leading voice in the Climate Change and Mental Health dialogue.

There is a growing evidence to support what many intuitively feel: contact with the natural world is important to child development, supports human health and wellbeing, is a protective factor in mental illness and can be used as a therapeutic tool

- Children's contact with nature has reduced over a relatively short period of time associated with various societal changes, and the pattern of this exacerbates existing inequalities.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health professionals are in a strong position to:

- support all young people who are concerned about the future and to amplify their voice
- educate about and advocate for CYP mental health needs linked to a changing world
- prepare for working in a climate changed future
- ensure their practice is environmentally, as well as socially and economically, sustainable
- promote, develop, evaluate and/or disseminate successful nature based interventions
- advocate for protection of the natural world as a public health strategy

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## RESPONSE

Establish a group, **A Greener CAMHS**, affiliated to the CAP FEC

- a. Identify key interested members of CAP Faculty
- b. Meet regularly by teleconference, to set goals for the group, and review progress.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP

1. Increase awareness amongst Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists of the issues mentioned above, and stimulate ongoing debate about our role in the response to the Climate and Ecological Crises.
2. Develop the knowledge base around the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on CYP mental health and explore increasing dialogue around Ecological Distress (Eco-Anxiety).
3. Develop our understanding of nature's role in healthy child and family function
4. Develop knowledge and practice around Nature-focused interventions in CAMHS
  - a. Present and contribute to evidence base
  - b. Develop network of collaborators
  - c. Develop resources for clinicians to use in practice
5. Partnership Working with external organisations to share knowledge and experience of:
  - a. Representing diverse CYP voices
  - b. Health and wellbeing dimensions of nature based work
6. Support practitioners who want to improve the sustainability of their own services, including clinician self care to avoid burn out.
7. Contribute to curriculum development

## VALUES

- Promoting a reciprocal relationship with nature - emphasising the need to, and benefits of, giving back to nature
- Promoting preventative strategies as well as identifying what works in the acute clinical context
- Listening to young peoples' voices and promoting participation and co-production
- Promoting social justice including equitable access to nature
- Promoting holistic care - mind, body, emotion, spirit

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## CURRENT ACTIONS

### 1. Expanding membership of this group

Nick, Alan, Catriona, Kathryn

Collating names, emails, phone numbers of interested CAMHS clinicians.

**Next steps:** meeting in early March to set out priority areas and delegate tasks

### 2. Support RCPsych position statement launch, and push for declaration of a Climate and Nature Emergency

### 3. Focus groups and survey of diverse range of YP voices across UK, and internationally

Impact of the CEE on CYP mental health, and what they need in response

**Next steps:** working with College youth advocates and pre-existing networks

### 4. COP26

Symposium with young people on the impact of Climate crisis on CYPMH

**Next steps:** submission by 5th March

### 5. Curriculum development

Including elements on CEE, sustainability, nature-based practice and insight

**Next steps:** share Alan's initial ideas with working group

### 6. Nature based practice

Build on current practice, skills, pilots: existing network of nature and health practitioners in SW, pilot projects in Tier 4 CAMHS, MyPlace, The Wildlife Trust, Circle of Life rediscovery, Forest school practitioners, Nature Connectedness.

**Next steps:** develop resources - web/app based. ?to guide CAMHS practitioners who want to take practice outdoors/weave in eco-psychology insights. Questions to ask. How to link with local nature providers.

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## Sustainable CAMHS Services

Bernadka suggested a Green Services Challenge. Disseminating information to CAP Fac members - based on Sus Com website.

## Messaging and Comms

Updating website, Greener CAMHS pages? social media presence? MindEd.

Position statement (RCPsych), Conference, COP26

## Literature and Evidence

Huge potential. Needs time.....

Allies: Becky Lovell/Exeter; Miles/Derby; Mel McCree/Bath; Liz Obrien/forest research; Strategic Research/NE network link

Questions to consider:

- CC impact on CYPMH and how best to mitigate and adapt services
- Nature based interventions in CAMHS
- The Natural World and Child Development
- Learning from Covid-19 what have YP experienced and found useful

## SCOPE IN/OUT

We will work alongside but aim not to replicate work being undertaken in other relevant groups:

Sustainability Committee, Climate Emergency Group, Psych Declares

?UK/International focus

What areas and tasks are/are specifically not included and impacted:

## CONSTRAINTS

Currently the functioning of this group depends on voluntary contribution, of already busy clinicians

We would like:

Formal recognition

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Support with comms

## **ROLES/Membership**

Alan Kellas

Nick Barnes

Catriona Mellor

Bernadka Dubicke

Dom Higgins

Katherine Kennet

Sharon Cuthbert

Priya Rajyaguru

Rajesh Gowda

Shuo Zhang

Lynne Jones

Kirsten Shukla