

## Climate Change and Your Stress

Thinking about the impacts of climate change on your life can cause stress and uncertainty.

### What is climate change?

The rising temperature of our planet may produce changes in weather patterns and the atmosphere. These changes are known as “climate change” and include severe weather, extreme heat, wildfires, and changes in sea level.

### Why does climate change cause stress for some people?

As more communities around the world experience the impacts of climate change, anxiety about the crisis is deepening.

Anxiety is especially true for young people. Worry, anger, and grief about environmental breakdown are common in this group.

### Is climate change anxiety a mental illness?

No, anxiety about the changing climate is **not** a form of mental illness. However, it can cause significant distress and may, for some, lead to despair or inaction. Coping with feelings around climate change is important, both to relieve the suffering from anxiety and stress, and also to allow people to take action.

### What are some ways to reduce the stress?

There are many ways to support yourself and the young people in your life:

- Talk openly about climate change. Take care to avoid minimizing other people's thoughts and feelings, which are often based on legitimate concerns.
- Monitor news sources and media intake (for yourself and children). “Doom-scrolling” adds to negative emotions and interferes with productive action.
- Spend time in nature; plant flowers or trees.
- Join an effective advocacy group, to take action and get peer support.
- Seek help if climate anxiety is paralyzing or significantly impairing function.

### What resources are available to help?

Talk Climate: <https://talkclimate.org>

HealthyChildren.org: [How to Talk to Kids About Climate Change](#)

Mothers Out Front: <https://www.mothersoutfront.org/>

Climate Psychiatry Alliance <https://www.climatepsychiatry.org>

### How can I get involved?

For more information about what Mass General Brigham is doing to address climate change, or to get involved, please reach out to these groups:

- MGH Center for the Environment and Health at [ceh@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:ceh@mgh.harvard.edu).

*Source: This document is a collaborative effort between the Mass General's Center for Environmental Health (CEH) and Primary Care Office Insite (PCOI)*