

You're Not Alone: Resources to Manage Ecoanxiety and Strong Emotions

UW Madison, Division of Extension, Climate Leadership Team

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- [Resources for Your Heart and Mind Recommended by the Loka Initiative](#)

Books, articles, essays, poems, songs, and contemplative practices to help you manage strong emotions and build resilience

- [Psychology Today blog](#): “5 Things That Can Alleviate Your Eco-Anxiety: Techniques to help you cope with your emotions and build inner resilience,” recommended by the Loka Initiative.

Resources for Young People

- [UW Extension website of mental health resources for youth.](#)
- [4-H Weather and Climate Youth Learning Lab](#) by Cooperative Extension. A 71-page manual that helps leaders guide grades third through fifth grade students through hands-on learning experiences in which they explore data, patterns, extremes, and forecasts to better understand weather and climate connections. Includes 9 activities that all show a content skill, the 4-H Life Skills, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the Climate Literacy Framework associated with the topic.

Resources for Agricultural Producers and Farmers

- UW Extension Farm Management Web site: [Addressing Farmer Stress and Mental Health with Mental Health First Aid, QPR and other programs](#)

Every day, Wisconsin farmers and farm families face financial challenges, demands of the job, and changes outside of their control that impact their lives and livelihoods such as climate change. A 2019 survey conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation found that mental health is an important issue to 82% of farmers/farm workers or their families.

- UW Extension's COMET: [Changing Our Mental Health and Trajectory](#), a two-hour program offered by Extension educators for the agricultural and rural communities in Wisconsin.

Resources for Everyone

Books

- [A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet](#) by Sarah Jaquette Ray.

This [tool kit](#) combines insights from psychology, sociology, social movements, mindfulness, and environmental humanities to help you let go of eco-guilt, resist burnout, and build resilience while advocating for climate justice. Excerpt: “What’s better than just ‘hope’? Developing empowerment to work toward a way of being for which you *yearn*.”

- [Take Heart: Encouragement for Earth’s Weary Lovers](#) by [Kathleen Dean Moore](#), award-winning author

Excerpt: “It’s hard work to defend ongoing life against all the powers of Bigger and More. Earth’s lovers are weary. Our hearts have so often been broken...patched and thumped and pumped up again.” But this is the work of our battered hearts: to celebrate a single pond, to hold our loved ones, to resist poisons, to rejoice in a beetle, to stand together for justice, to thrive in joy. It is easy to become disheartened. But it is impossible to quit.”

- [Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in Without Going Crazy](#) by [Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone](#)

Using an empowerment strategy called the *Work That Reconnects*, the authors offer a guide through a transformational process informed by mythic journeys, modern psychology, spirituality, and holistic sciences. A review: “More than any book I’ve read, **Active Hope** shows us the true dimensions of this crisis, and the way our hearts and actions can be part of the great turning toward healing...a brilliant guide to sanity and love.”

- [Radical Joy for Hard Times: Finding Meaning and Making Beauty in Earth’s Broken Places](#) by Trebbe Johnson

In a world devastated by human interaction and natural disasters—clearcutting, fracking, extreme weather, urban sprawl—it’s essential to create art, rituals, and joy in wounded places in order to heal our hearts and communities. The award-winning author encourages taking “worthwhile action” that includes ceremony, vigil, apology, art, handmade memorials, and rituals to connect to the natural places we love and need as tools for healing. Her practice called “Wild Gifts for Broken Places” is used in therapeutic circles across the country.

- [Imagine It! A Handbook for a Happier Planet](#) by Laurie David and Heather Reisman

This book describes many actions we can take to soothe wounded hearts and minds. If you feel scared that the climate crisis is so big that your individual actions can’t make a difference, then read this book to stimulate you to “imagine” changes created through action!

Podcasts

- American Psychologist Association (APA), [Episode 138](#)

“Speaking of Psychology: How to cope with climate anxiety”, with Thomas Doherty, PsyD, and Ashlee Cunsolo, PhD

An APA survey found that two-thirds of American adults said that they felt at least a little “eco-anxiety,” defined as anxiety or worry about climate change and its effects. Two researchers discuss the mental health effects of climate change and what can we do to cope and build resilience in ourselves.

- American Psychologist Association, [Episode 291](#)

Psychologist Kim Meidenbauer, PhD, and public health researcher Amruta Nori-Sarma, PhD, discuss how heat affects people’s mental health, emotions, and even cognitive abilities; the link between heat, violence, and aggression; who is most vulnerable to the effects of extreme heat; and what policymakers could be doing to mitigate its effects.

- [Podcast](#): “Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World” by [Katharine Hayhoe, 2021](#)

Groups

- [Good Grief Network](#)

Good Grief Network (GGN) is a nonprofit organization based in the United States that brings people together to metabolize collective grief, eco-distress, and other heavy emotions that arise in response to daunting planetary crises. The mission is to “create spaces to gather in community, process the painful feelings and realities of our time, and commit to meaningful action.” GGN offers this training:

[10 Steps to Resilience & Empowerment in a Chaotic Climate](#)

A peer-to-peer support group hosted by GGN staff for people overwhelmed by eco-distress and collective trauma from social and ecological injustices. This transformative program for processing eco-anxiety and climate grief is explored in live, virtual sessions with small groups of people who are looking for truths and communion to manage strong feelings about climate change.

- Action for the Climate Emergency—An anxiety education and peer support campaign called “[Let’s Talk About It.](#)”
- [A Peer to Peer Change Group: The Climate Optimist](#): Learn how to form discussion and action groups in your community by partnering and relying on your friends and neighbors for support and inspiration using a shared book of action ideas. The Climate Optimist Universe is designed to spark optimism, creativity, and solutions thinking built on a fact-based foundation about impacts and forecasts.

Compiled by the Ecoanxiety Work Group of the UW Madison, Division of Extension's Climate Leadership Team, August 2024.

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