



Managing climate anxiety

Climate change is a threat to our existence, and for many, amid the constant cycle of negative news, this leads to a loss of hope, and increasing despair. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed.

[Climate anxiety](#) is what we describe when there is an ongoing or chronic fear of environmental doom. It can apply to past, present, or future events.

As with any stressful situation, people display a range of emotions from denial, avoidance, stress reactions, a deep sense of grief, through to engagement and activism. This is important to recognise as there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

So, in the face of what seems to be a seemingly intractable problem, what can we do? The [Australian Psychological Society](#) has a range of advice that helps people think, take action, and cope.

Steps to take action

Recognise

Firstly, recognising that it is causing stress and anxiety is important. This helps normalise the feelings. It is a normal reaction to an uncertain situation.

Limit

Limit exposure to climate-related content. Get what you need to know from the news, then take a break. Rest your brain. We can become cognitively overloaded, and this is not helpful.

Practise

Practise self-care. Healthy eating, exercise, positive connections, pleasurable activities. Our [wellbeing advice](#) might be helpful

Connect

Get into nature. Being in the environment is restorative. Get your fill of green (park/forest) or blue (sea/sky). Even in cities we can do this – use parks or backyards, lie down and look at the sky, and the wonder of the shapes of clouds.

Act

Get involved. Take action. This helps with overcoming the sense of 'it's too big, and I can't do anything about it'.

People who took part in a climate change adaptation program we ran in Adelaide reported that joining the group and taking adaptation action helped them feel in control. Joining groups helps set collective actions, helps you talk about what is going on, and is generally a good thing to do for your wellbeing, anyway.

You can get prepared for disasters including climate fuelled extreme weather. Our [Rediplan](#) will give you tips on how to prepare practically, as well as preparing your mind.

You can look at the [50 Ways of Doing More Good](#) which give practical things you can do to build resilience and help reduce climate change impacts.

Reduce

Reduce your environmental footprint, from heating to eating to transport, there are many adjustments you can make. They can be small steps, as Lao Tzu said, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

We put solar panels on our roof 12 years ago, and at the time this sort of action was derided as virtue signalling. Now rooftop solar is a major disruptor in the energy system, and accelerating the transition to clean renewable sources.

Talk

Talk to your local councillors and politicians about climate change so they know it's an issue you care about.

Find hope

Cultivate active hope. By taking action, you not only reduce your anxieties, but you also make a positive contribution to the fixing the problem. We [have already](#) achieved much in dealing with climate change.

Hope is one of the pillars of psychosocial support. As humans we are used to adversity, we change and adapt. We are also resourceful and problem solvers.

Climate change is real and here now, and it can be worrying, but you can manage this, and be part of the solution.