

Climate Anxiety

Climate anxiety is essentially a sense of fear, worry or tension linked to climate change. These emotions can become overwhelming and cause us to feel a real sense of loss of hope and control, making us question if and how things can possibly get better.

These emotions, although linked to a worry about the future and climate change, can also be triggered by the byproduct of this concern which includes the worry and concern for our loved ones and humanity itself.

Climate anxiety is often accompanied by feelings of grief, anger, guilt, and shame, which in turn can affect your mood, behavior, and your way of thinking.

Climate anxiety is becoming increasingly common. With such a wealth of information available to us on demand it is inevitable that we will come across news regarding the state of the climate and the planet. From articles about natural disasters to adverts supporting zero waste products that in doing so share the horrors of plastic waste.

On an individual level, it's can be very beneficial to share your worries and fears with trusted friends, a therapist or by joining a support group.

Aside from this, there are a number of self help ways that you can support your anxiety and take back control of your emotions, unlocking the ability to stay focused in the present moment and what is possible now.



What is anxiety?

Anxiety, as defined by the National Health Service (UK) is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe.

On a physiological level when you experience a stimulus that is stressful this activates your sympathetic nervous system

When this happens, in order to fight the stressful stimulus your adrenal glands can be found at the top of each kidney, will release cortisol into your blood stream.

This is great if you are in need of cortisol to fight or manage a stressful situation that is actually happening, however, if this stressful stimulus is only in your mind this cortisol can have detrimental impact on the body, especially if this happens regularly over a long period of time.

This can cause tension, anger, annoyance, panic, anxiety, low immunity, physical illness, agitated, hyper-vigilance, headaches and more.

The mind cannot tell what is real and what isn't. Even if you are safe in the present moment the mind when you think of these events surrounding the climate and your existence, the mind which induces the sympathetic nervous system.

Surrendering







In these moments of stress, worry and fear it is imperative that we reassure our mind and also ourselves that we are safe in this present moment, that we are okay in the here and now.

Grounding

Grounding helps us stay in the present moment, it helps us tune into exactly where we are right now to connect with the earth and simply be.

Grounding is a fantastic practice that can offer relief in the moments in which you feel consumed by this anxiety. Grounding can be done anywhere at any time, you can ground and connect yourself back to earth whenever you feel you need to.

Sit in a comfortable position with your feet resting flat on the ground

-  Notice and feel the sensations of the earth under your feet
-  Feel the pull of gravity heavy on your feet
-  Wiggle your toes and rock your feet to embrace the sensations
-  Envision strong roots growing from the soles of your feet
-  Watch as they grow deep down into the earth beneath you into the earth's core
-  Feel yourself connect with the power of the earth in this present moment

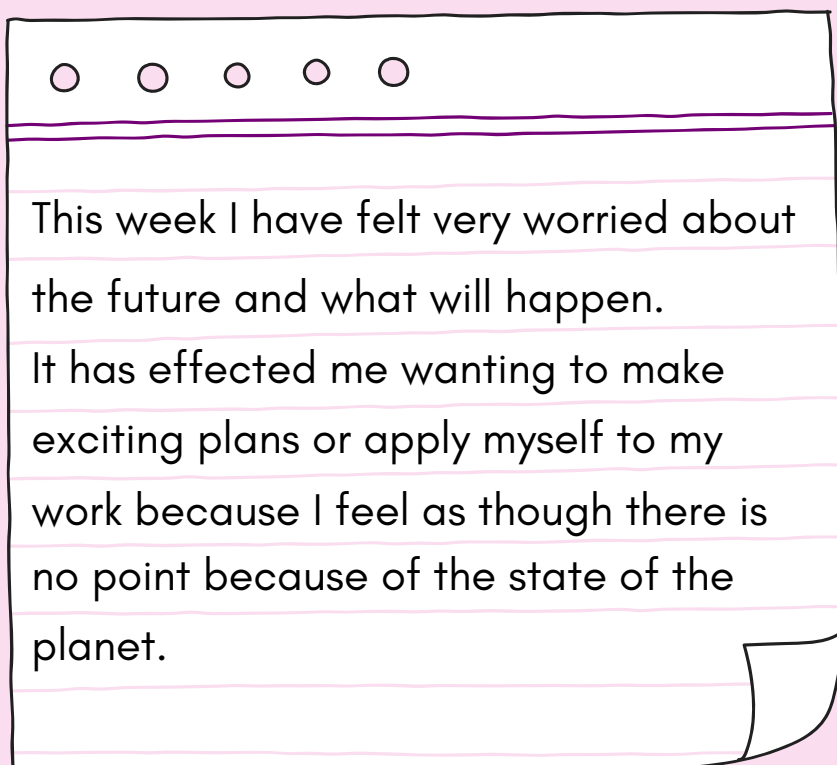
Letting Go Practice

Releasing these emotions and surrendering this present moment is easier said than done, but with practice you too can let go of these negative emotions and allow your mind to shift to a calm and safe state.

Take a moment and notice anything around climate change that has been prominent in your mind this week. Ask yourself has it effected your personal morale? Has it effected your hope or prospects for your future? How present have you been with yourself and those around you?

Be honest, compassionate and patient with yourself.

On a piece of paper write down and explore your answers.



The illustration shows a piece of white paper with horizontal lines, resembling a notepad. At the top, there are five small circles. The paper has a folded bottom-right corner. A purple arrow points from the right side towards the paper. The text written on the paper is:

This week I have felt very worried about the future and what will happen. It has effected me wanting to make exciting plans or apply myself to my work because I feel as though there is no point because of the state of the planet.

It is important that we **acknowledge and recognise the unhelpful and unhealthy emotions** rooted in our climate anxiety so we can progress to focus our energy on shifting our mindset to be more positive and present.

Control

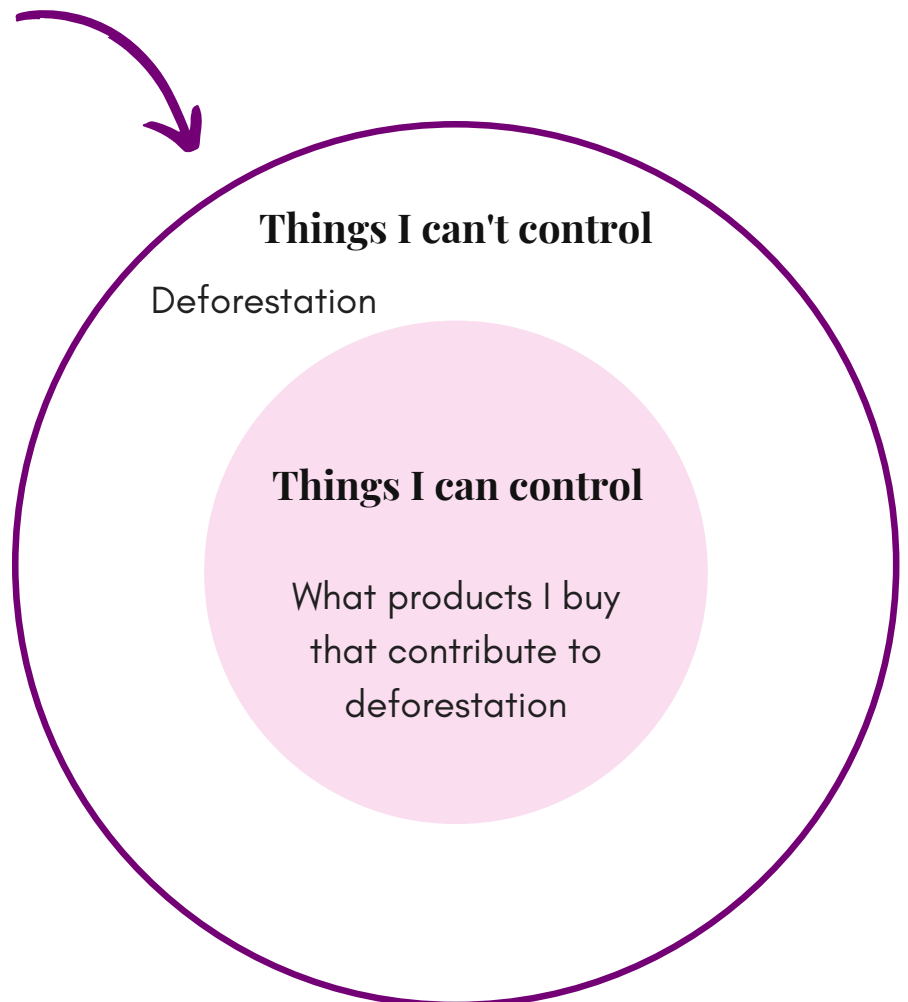
In these moments of anxiety it is important to recognise what is within our control, and accept and release what is not. Have faith and trust in what will be.

Find balance, focus on what you can control and let go of what you can't.

Shifting your focus onto what you can control can enable you to take back the power from your feelings of being overwhelmed. Once you have established what is within your control, focus your energy on proactive solutions.

The Circle of Control




On a piece of paper draw two circles, one small circle in the centre of your page and one large around this circle. In the inner circle write "things I can control" and the outer circle "things I can't control". Take a moment and write anything and everything that has become overwhelming for your mind. This can be sentences or just words. Allow all of your consuming emotions to be released onto the page.



Small steps to saving the world




Change is made by the actions of the people, whether these actions are big or small. You can actively shape the world with the actions you undertake every day.

There is positive change happening all around us whether we choose to see it or not, and although this may be slow moving, we can actively choose to help and shape this change. This can also help us find a sense of belonging whilst broadening the mindsets and horizons of both ourselves and others.

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-  Ask yourself, **where do I want to see change?** On a piece of paper write your thoughts.
 -  Take your time. This practice may stir emotions, allow yourself to feel and be with these emotions. Your emotions are valid, ensure you allow compassion for yourself through this.
 -  Now **think about how you can contribute to these changes.** How you can use your compassion and support to ensure your community achieves lasting change.

Take action

Taking action can feel overwhelming and it is important to remember that this does not have to be on a grand scale, as often it is the small steps that we take that lead to big changes.

-  Follow social media accounts that support the change you want to see
-  Seek job or volunteer opportunities within organisations that reflect your values and embody the change you want to see
-  Listen to podcasts, read books and blogs and watch programmes to educate yourself and find inspiration

“Each person must live their life as a model for others.”

- Rosa Parks

You can find more resources to support your mental health and well-being on EmPowers well-being hub [here](#). It all starts with you.

Or follow EmPower now



It only takes one person to change the world.



Influencers to Follow

Often a large portion of the news we see on climate change and the planet is negative and uprooting. Following accounts that highlight positive news on climate change can help shift our mindset into one that recognises and acknowledges the good, the positive changes that are happening all around us.

➤ Sam Bentley shares easy to digest video content highlighting sustainable living and positive news about the planet and climate change. Raising awareness about the positive changes that are happening to bring hope to his viewers.



➤ Brooke at [secondhand.sustainability](#) provides insights, resources and all about how individuals can lower their carbon footprint and shop sustainability. The page uses content containing easy to digest information using videos and text over lay media, all whilst maintaining a judgement free space.



➤ Earthopia share positive environmental news to remind us that there are some good things happening in the world, and to protect us from falling into climate doomism.



➤ Daniela V. Fernandez, the founder and CEO of Sustainable Ocean Alliance, one of LinkedIn's top voices in social impact and a Forbes 30 Under 30, raises awareness around climate change. She shares news, impactful stories and opportunities around climate change, highlighting positive and innovative news.

