

Climate Change and Mental Health

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March 21 2022

National Institute for Health Care
Management webinar



Human impacts of climate change

Physical health

Mental health and wellbeing

- Acute events
- Chronic changes
- Indirect consequences
- Vicarious experiences



Impacts of natural disasters

- PTSD, depression, general anxiety
- Suicide, substance abuse
- Sleep disorders
- Domestic abuse and interpersonal violence



How can
society
respond?

Inclusive early-warning
systems

Support for mental health
services after disasters

Nature-based solutions, e.g. to
manage wildfires or flooding

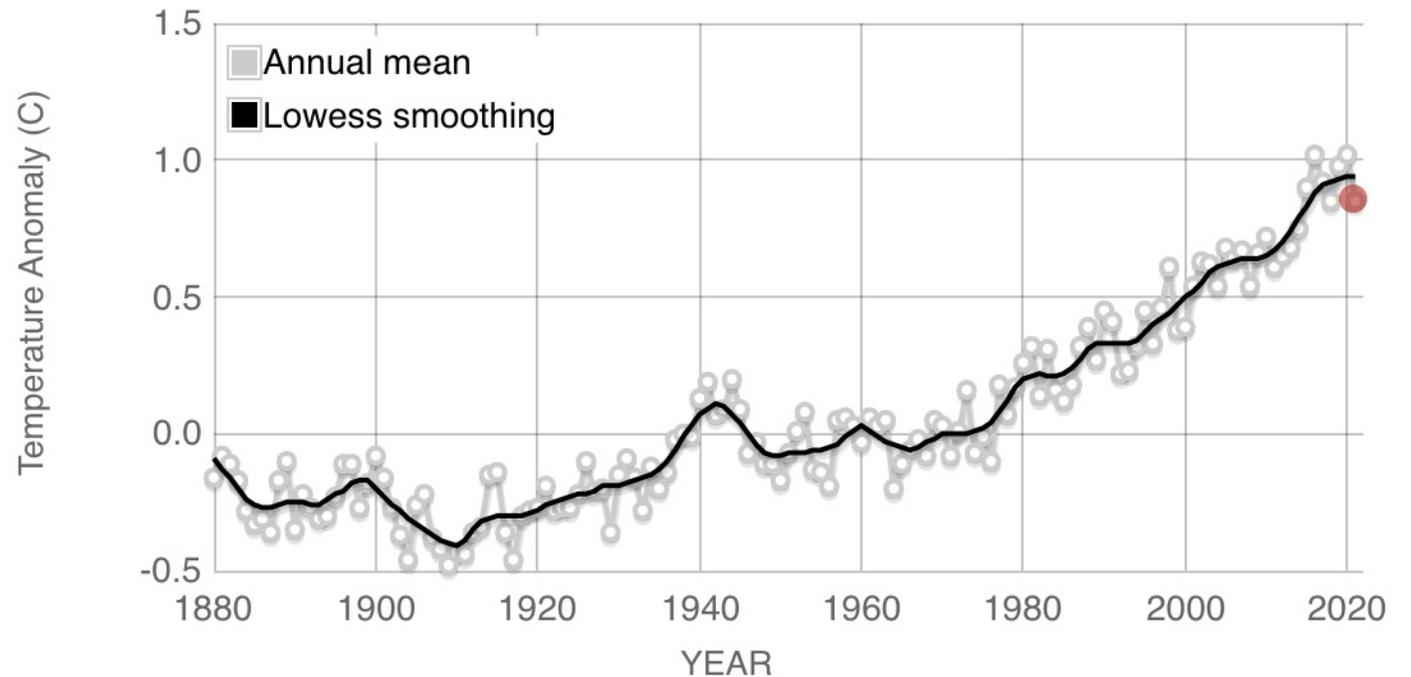
Impacts of chronic changes

Heat can impair

- Mental health
- Mood
- Social relations
- Cognitive functioning

GLOBAL LAND-OCEAN TEMPERATURE INDEX

Data source: NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS). Credit: NASA/GISS



How can society respond?

- Cooling centers
- Nature-based solutions, e.g. increased tree canopy
- Inclusive safety net



Indirect effects

- Food insecurity
- Displacement



How can society respond?

- Changing agricultural practices
- Encouraging healthy diets
- Social safety net
- Help with community migration
- Acknowledge importance of place identity

Vicarious impacts: Perceptions of environmental change

“You think your house is permanent... When you lose your house and everything you own, you learn *everything is temporary*”

(Hurricane Sandy survivor)

“I just know I don’t feel real, and home doesn’t feel like home at all”

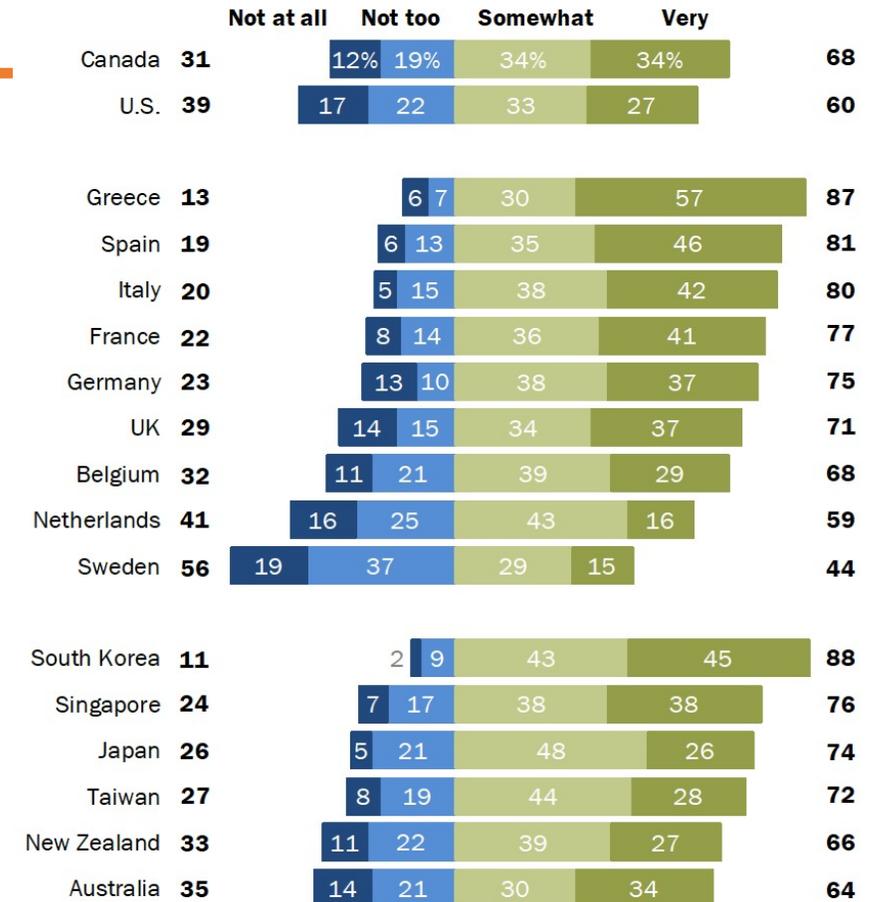
(Hurricane Michael survivor)

Anxiety and distress

45% of young people, 16-25, surveyed around the world in 2021 report that **climate change has a negative impact on their daily functioning** (eating, concentrating, work, school, sleeping, spending time in nature, playing, having fun, relationships).

Many are concerned climate change will personally harm them during their lifetimes

% who are ___ concerned that global climate change will harm them personally at some point in their lifetime

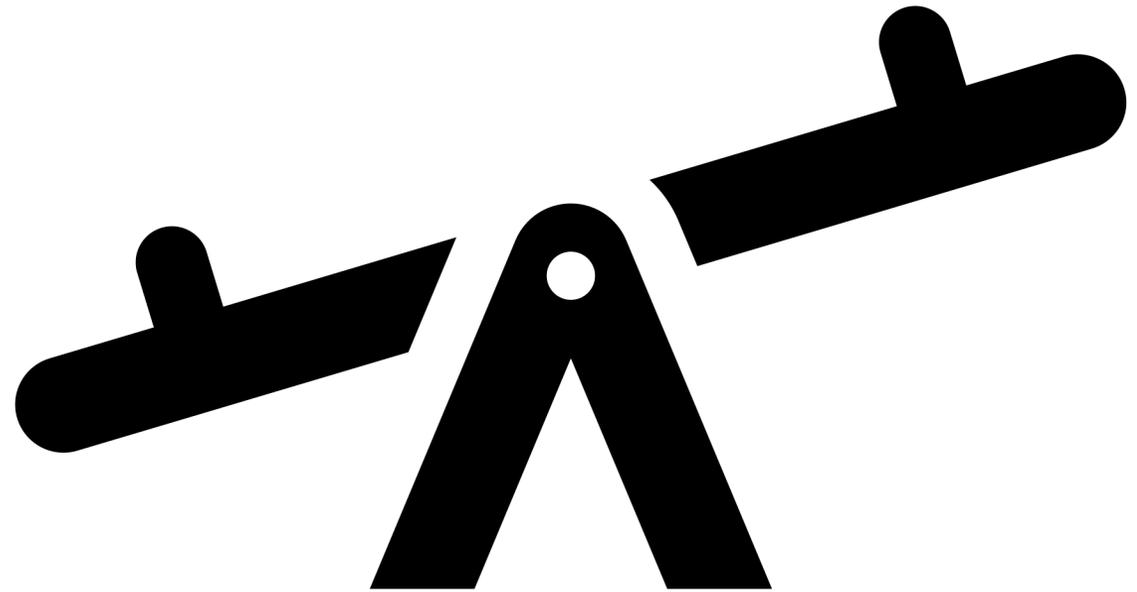


Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey. Q31.

"In Response to Climate Change, Citizens in Advanced Economies Are Willing To Alter How They Live and Work"

INCREASED
INEQUITY:
SOME GROUPS
ARE AT GREATER
RISK



Vulnerability due to

- Geographic location
- Lack of financial resources
- Social marginalization and discrimination
- Physiological factors

- Women
- People with preexisting health conditions
- Elderly
- Indigenous Peoples

Children and Infants

- Increased severity, prevalence of mental health impacts
- Vicarious vulnerability
- Effects on learning, behavior, emotional regulation
- Some effects are likely to be long-term or permanent



How can individuals respond?

- Emotion regulation
- Social support
- Sense of optimism
- Sense of efficacy
- Behavioral engagement

