

# THE GREEN MIND



# TOOLKIT

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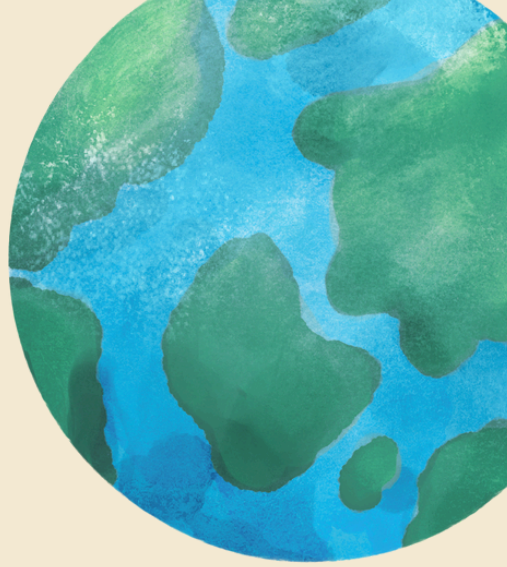
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# INTRODUCTION

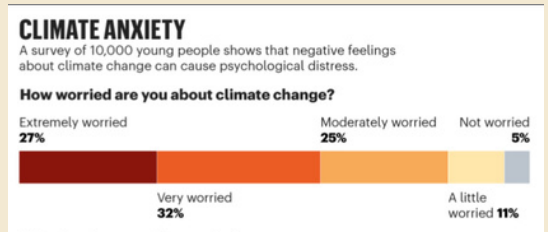
Climate change is no longer just an environmental issue. It is also affecting how young people feel. Imagine watching the news and seeing stories about wildfires or floods. If you feel a knot of worry, sadness, or helplessness in your stomach, you are not alone. In a recent Canadian survey, seventy-eight percent of young people aged sixteen to twenty-five reported that climate change affects their overall mental health. Nearly half, forty-eight percent, said they believe that if things do not change, humanity is doomed.

Many youth have described experiencing fear for the future, grief over environmental losses, guilt about their personal carbon footprint, or anger toward the lack of meaningful action. These emotions, often referred to as eco-anxiety, climate grief, or eco-distress, are becoming increasingly common among those aged twelve to twenty-two in Canada and around the world.

# THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The results of a national survey involving 1,000 Canadian youth reflect how widespread these emotions are. Seventy-three percent described the future as “frightening,” seventy-eight percent said climate change impacts their mental health, and nearly half believed that humanity may be doomed without urgent change. Many also expressed feelings of anger or a sense of abandonment due to the lack of action by institutions and decision-makers ([lakeheadu.ca](http://lakeheadu.ca)).

Mental health experts emphasize that feeling anxious, sad, or overwhelmed about climate change is a natural and valid response. It is not a pathology, and it does not mean something is wrong with you. Our connection to the Earth is emotional, physical, and cultural. When we witness environmental harm, it is normal to feel that something is wrong, both globally and within ourselves.

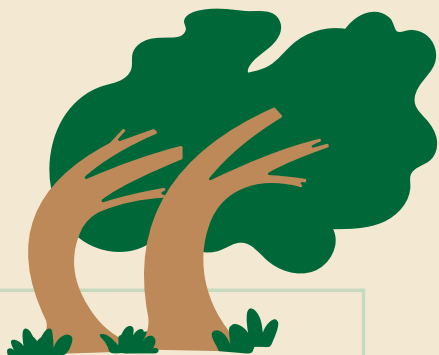


Eco-anxiety is defined as persistent worry about environmental collapse, a rational reaction to a very real threat.

The good news is that these feelings can be recognized, managed, and even transformed. With the right tools, young people can work with these emotions instead of being overwhelmed by them. This toolkit is here to support you in that journey.

# WHAT IS THE CLIMATE WELLNESS TOOLKIT

The Climate Wellness Toolkit is a resource designed to help young people understand their climate-related emotions, cope with stress through mind-body strategies, find purpose through action, and build community support. It is not about minimizing what you feel, it is about helping you feel heard, supported, and equipped to respond in healthy ways.



The toolkit is structured as five sessions, which can be adapted into four to six workshops or chapters. Each session includes guided journal prompts, worksheets, activities, and time for reflection. You are encouraged to print out pages or use a notebook so you can write, draw, and personalize the experience. If you are working with a class, club, or group of friends, you will also find optional group discussions and peer-based activities. Each session can be completed on its own or as part of a sequence.

# WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN EACH SESSION

## **“Climate and Me” Reflection Journal**

Session  
01

This session invites you to explore your personal thoughts and feelings about climate change. Through guided journaling, you will reflect on how climate change appears in your life and what it means to you emotionally and socially.

## **Emotional Mapping**

Session  
02

This session focuses on identifying and naming eco-emotions such as anxiety, grief, anger, and guilt. You will use creative tools like an emotion wheel and mapping exercises to better understand where your feelings come from and how they show up in your body and mind.

## **Somatic Grounding**

Session 03

Booklets are printed materials with four or more pages, containing details about a business, event, product, promotion, etc. They are also known as catalogs or pamphlets, and are usually created to communicate a message to a wide variety of audiences.



## Designing a Climate Wellness Campaign

### Session 04

This session helps you turn your emotions into meaningful action. You will be provided with templates and prompts to plan your own youth-led project or campaign focused on climate wellness. Through action, feelings of fear or powerlessness can be transformed into empowerment and hope.

## Community Care and Check-ins

### Session 05

The final session emphasizes peer support and connection. It includes ideas for creating group “climate emotion” circles and structured check-ins. You will learn how to listen actively, share stories, and recognize when it is time to reach out for professional or community-based help.

# Designed With You in Mind

Throughout the toolkit, you will find photos, infographics, and visual tools that bring key ideas to life. The design is intentionally youth-friendly and adaptable, whether you are using an interactive PDF or printing pages to complete by hand. The content is rooted in Canadian experiences and resources but also draws on global research and examples.

The toolkit includes Indigenous perspectives on healing, land, and nature. Indigenous youth have long been at the forefront of environmental protection and offer vital teachings about resilience, responsibility, and relationality. Their wisdom such as viewing nature as a source of strength and healing has helped shape the values and structure of this toolkit.



## Why this Matters

This resource was created for you, a young person navigating an uncertain future, but not without power. Each section is an invitation to understand yourself more deeply, to care for your mental health, and to connect with others who are feeling the same way. As one study notes, these difficult emotions are an appropriate and meaningful response to the crisis. With the right support and tools, they can become the foundation of resilience and hope.

You are not alone. By working through this toolkit, you will gain coping strategies, emotional insight, and a sense of community. In fact, seventy-one percent of Canadian youth believe that together, we can make a difference on climate change and over half believe that they personally can be part of that change.

Take a deep breath. Pick up a pen or open a fresh document. The journey toward climate wellness begins here. Let us walk through it together.

# SESSION 1

## “CLIMATE & ME” REFLECTION JOURNAL

### OBJECTIVE

In this first session, you will reflect on your personal experience with climate change and express your thoughts and emotions through guided journaling. This space is private and judgment-free, created to help you explore how climate and the environment matter to you. Writing can be deeply therapeutic. Studies show that journaling can reduce stress, improve mood, and help individuals better understand and manage their emotions. Think of this as the beginning of your own “climate story”, a chance to explore your emotional landscape before diving deeper in later sessions.



# WHY KEEP A CLIMATE JOURNAL?

When your mind feels full, writing things down helps bring clarity. Whether you are overwhelmed, frustrated, hopeful, or confused, journaling gives your thoughts and emotions a place to land. Research shows that expressing emotions through writing can support both mental and physical well-being. In the context of climate anxiety, journaling becomes a tool for self-awareness and empowerment. It can shift fear into understanding, and isolation into insight. This is not about being “correct” or polished, it is about being honest with yourself. You can write in any language or style that feels natural. You are welcome to use drawings, bullet points, lists, or poetry. The goal is expression, not perfection.

Tip: Choose a space where you feel relaxed. It might be a quiet corner, a park bench, or your favorite study spot. Some people enjoy decorating their journals or using a notebook that feels special. The important part is creating a space where you feel safe and open to reflection.



## Guided Reflection Prompts – “Climate & Me”

Take a few deep breaths before beginning. Read each prompt carefully and respond in as much or as little detail as you feel comfortable. You may write several sentences or just a few words. If a prompt does not speak to you, feel free to adapt or skip it. These questions are designed to help you explore how climate change intersects with your experiences and emotions.

### My Earliest Climate Memory

Think back to the first time you learned about climate change or environmental issues. What was the situation? How old were you? What stood out to you at the time? What feelings did it bring up?

### How Climate Change Appears in My Life Today

Do you notice any signs of climate or environmental change in your daily life? Perhaps in the news, in your community, or through personal experiences? Write one or two examples and how they impact you.

### Emotions I Feel

List the emotions you experience when thinking about climate change. You might feel anxious, inspired, angry, guilty, overwhelmed, hopeful, or a combination. For each emotion, consider what situations or thoughts tend to bring it up.

### What I Love About Nature

Balance the heaviness by writing about the natural places or experiences you cherish. What parts of the natural world bring you joy or calm? Describe how they make you feel.

### My Climate Worries

What specific aspects of climate change concern you the most? These could be large global issues or local challenges. Naming these fears can make them feel more manageable.

### My Climate Hopes

What gives you a sense of hope or strength? It might be a person, a solution, a community effort, or something you observed in nature. Write down at least one source of hope, even if small.

### How I Cope Day-to-Day

When you feel overwhelmed by climate news or emotions, how do you respond? What strategies—positive or otherwise—do you use to cope? This is a chance to reflect on how you manage these feelings in your life.

### Why I Care

Why is climate change important to you personally? What motivates you to care about the environment and the future? Reflecting on your values can help ground your purpose and strengthen your voice.

You do not need to complete all prompts in one sitting. Take your time. You may return to this page over the coming days or weeks and add new thoughts. This journal is yours to revisit and grow with as your perspective evolves.

# Personal Reflection Example



Below is a fictional excerpt from a youth's climate journal. It is shared to illustrate one way these prompts might be answered. Your reflections will be unique, and that is exactly how it should be.

"My earliest climate memory is from when I was about ten. There was a news story about a town in Alberta evacuating because of wildfires. I remember seeing kids my age leaving their homes and feeling scared. I asked my mom if that could happen to us. It was the first time I understood that climate change could affect real people. Now, I see it more directly. Spring floods in my town have become more intense. Our school's soccer field was underwater for days. It made the climate crisis feel close. I feel anxious when I see these things happening more often, and sometimes angry because it seems like leaders are not doing enough. But I also feel hopeful when I see my friends joining climate strikes or organizing clean-ups. It reminds me that I am not alone.

I love nature. The lake near my house is my favorite place. I go there when I need to clear my head. The sound of the water calms me. I care about climate change because I want future generations to enjoy that lake. I want the trees to still be standing and the air to still be clean. Talking about it with my best friend helps. We do not solve anything, but we share snacks, talk it out, and feel less alone."

As this example shows, it is normal to experience a mix of emotions, fear, hope, anger, calm—all at once. That is part of the process. By completing this session, you have taken an important step toward understanding your emotional connection to the climate crisis. Give yourself credit for showing up to this reflection. It takes courage.

In the next session, we will explore the emotions you identified in more depth, helping you map and navigate them with greater clarity. Before you continue, take a moment to reread what you have written.

If you feel ready, you might choose to share one of your reflections with a friend or trusted adult. Often, you will find someone else says, "I feel that way too." In that moment, something that felt isolating can become a source of connection.

**End of Session 1. When you feel ready, continue to Session 2, where we will begin mapping the emotional landscape of climate change and exploring how to move through it.**

# Session 02:

# Mapping your Eco-Emotions



## Objective:

This session focuses on identifying and understanding the full range of emotions that arise in response to climate change. Eco-anxiety is often used as a catch-all term, but in reality, many emotions can surface, grief, anger, guilt, fear, hope, and even numbness. By naming and mapping these feelings, you begin to take away some of their power and mystery.

Through visual tools like an emotion map and the Climate Emotions Wheel, you will explore how these emotions show up in your mind and body. By the end of this session, you will better understand what you feel, why you feel it, and how common these responses are among others your age.

## 2.1 What Are “Eco-Emotions”?

Eco-emotions are emotions connected to environmental issues and climate change. While eco-anxiety, persistent worry about the future of the planet, is one of the most talked-about, it is just one piece of a much larger emotional puzzle. Researchers and psychologists have identified several key eco-emotions that many young people experience:



### **Climate Anxiety**

- Climate Anxiety is ongoing worry or fear about climate-related disasters or future conditions. It might involve racing thoughts, trouble sleeping, or constant mental replaying of worst-case scenarios.



### **Eco-Grief**

- Eco-Grief is a deep sadness about environmental loss, such as extinction of species, destruction of ecosystems, or changes to meaningful landscapes. This can feel like personal grief and is often described as a sense of mourning or heartbreak.



### **Eco-Anger**

- Eco-Anger is the frustration or outrage directed at those perceived to be harming the environment or ignoring the climate crisis. It may be felt toward corporations, governments, or generational systems that failed to act.



### **Eco-Guilt**

- Eco-Guilt includes guilt about your own environmental footprint or not doing enough. It may arise from everyday actions like flying, driving, or consuming fast fashion and can lead to feelings of shame or inadequacy.



### **Eco-Paralysis**

- Eco-Paralysis is a state of overwhelm, where the scale of the climate crisis feels so massive that you feel stuck, numb, or unable to act. It can emerge after exposure to distressing news or a sense that your actions are too small to matter..



### **Solastalgja**

- Solastalgja is the emotional pain of witnessing the loss or transformation of your home environment while still living in it. It can feel like homesickness for a place that has changed.



### **Hope**

- Hope, though sometimes overlooked, is also an eco-emotion. It is the belief that solutions are possible and that progress can be made. Hope often exists alongside other feelings such as grief or anger, not in place of them.

You may also recognize feelings like confusion, betrayal, loneliness, or determination. All of these are valid responses to a complex issue. Tools like the Climate Emotions Wheel, developed by mental health experts, can help make sense of this emotional complexity.

The wheel arranges emotions into core categories such as anger, sadness, fear, and hope and provides more specific examples in outer rings. For example, “anger” may include frustration and resentment; “fear” may include panic or dread; and “hope” may include feelings of inspiration and strength. Using the wheel can help you find more precise words to describe what you are experiencing.

# Emotion Mapping Exercise

Now that you have learned about different eco-emotions, this session offers two exercises to help you visualize them: a mind-map and a body map. You may choose to do one or both.

## A. Mind-Map of Climate Emotions

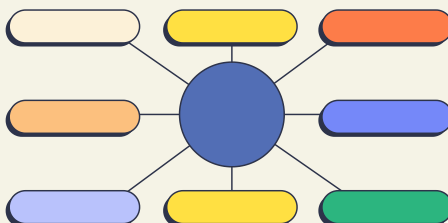
Take a blank sheet of paper and write “Climate and Me” in the center. Draw a circle around it. This will be the starting point for your mind-map.

From the center, draw branches outward for each major emotion you feel related to climate change. For example, you might include “Anxiety,” “Anger,” “Hope,” or “Guilt.” Use the terms that resonate most with you.

Next, for each emotion branch, create smaller offshoots that answer the question: “When or why do I feel this?” For example:

- Under “Anxiety,” you might write: “When I read about rising sea levels,” or “When I think about the year 2050.”
- Under “Anger,” you might write: “When I see local pollution” or “When I learn about broken climate promises.”
- Under “Hope,” you could include: “When I hear about reforestation projects” or “When I see youth organizing climate marches.”

You can add color or symbols to your map such as red lines for anger triggers or green ones for calming influences. This activity helps you see patterns in your emotional responses and what influences them. You may notice, for example, that time in nature is associated with hope, while social media often connects to feelings of helplessness.



## B. Body Map of Emotions

This exercise helps you connect your climate-related emotions to physical sensations. Begin by drawing a simple outline of a body, it can be a stick figure or a more detailed shape.

Now reflect on where in your body you feel different emotions:

- Climate anxiety might show up as a racing heart, tight chest, or shaky hands.
- Grief might be felt in the eyes (tears), throat (lump), or stomach (emptiness).
- Anger may appear as clenched fists, a hot face, or tense shoulders.
- Hope might feel like warmth in the chest or lightness in the stomach.

Use labels, colors, or symbols to mark these sensations on the body outline. You might draw a small storm cloud near the head to represent anxiety, or a glowing circle in the chest for hope. There is no wrong way to do this.

This is a grounding technique that helps you become more aware of how emotions show up physically. It can also help you identify areas where you hold tension and recognize the connection between mental and physical stress.

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## Navigating Big Feelings

Once you have identified your climate emotions, it becomes easier to understand what they are telling you. Anxiety may indicate care and concern. Anger may signal a desire for justice. Guilt might reflect a need to live more in line with your values.

Rather than trying to eliminate these feelings, consider what they are communicating. Emotions are not problems to fix; they are messages to listen to. One helpful approach is mindfulness, pausing to notice your thoughts and sensations without judgment. For example, “I feel anxious right now because of a news story. My heart is pounding. This is a normal response. I can take a breath and let this feeling pass.”

Talking about your emotions also helps. You may feel alone in your climate fears, but research shows that most young people experience them. In fact, the emotional burden of climate change is often easier to carry when shared. Speaking with a friend, classmate, or family member can make a big difference. Some youth find that doing the Climate Emotions Wheel or emotion map together sparks conversations and reduces the sense of isolation.

Studies show that youth who participate in group-based climate action or discussions cope better than those who try to face it alone. Community support and shared purpose can transform feelings of despair into motivation.



## 10.3 Reflection and Next Steps

Take a few minutes to review your emotion map or body map. What stood out to you? Did any emotions appear more frequently or feel stronger than others? Were there any surprises? This insight can guide how you take care of your emotional well-being in the next sessions.

You have now:

- Reflected on a wide range of climate-related emotions
- Practiced naming and mapping what you feel
- Explored how emotions show up in your body
- Gained tools to start coping and connecting with others

This self-awareness is a powerful foundation. In the next session, you will learn somatic grounding techniques, practical, body-based strategies to help you calm stress and regain balance when emotions run high.

End of Session 2. When you are ready, continue to Session 3 to begin building your personal toolkit of mind-body coping techniques.

# Session 3

## Somatic Grounding- Calming Mind and Body





## Objective

In this session, you will explore somatic techniques, practices that work through the body, to manage stress and anxiety related to climate change. “Somatic” means “of the body,” and it reflects the truth that climate anxiety is not just experienced mentally; it also affects your body. A racing heart, tense muscles, and rapid breathing are common physical responses to emotional stress. Grounding exercises help counteract these symptoms by activating your body’s natural relaxation response. In this session, you will try three types of somatic tools: breathwork, nature connection, and movement. Each can help regulate your nervous system and build resilience when practiced regularly. Think of these as foundational skills for your personal climate wellness toolkit.

## **3.1 Breathwork: Finding Calm Through Breathing**

Breathing is one of the most powerful tools you have for managing anxiety, and it is always available to you. When you feel calm, your breath is usually slow and deep. When you feel stressed, your breath often becomes fast and shallow. By consciously slowing and deepening your breath, you can tell your nervous system that it is safe to relax. Research shows that deep breathing activates the parasympathetic system, the “rest and digest” mode, which helps calm anxiety and lower stress hormones.

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### **3.11 Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)**

Sit or lie down in a relaxed position. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Breathe in through your nose for four seconds, focusing on expanding your belly, not your chest. Then exhale slowly through your mouth for four to six seconds. Your belly should rise and fall while your chest stays relatively still. This deep breathing method improves oxygen exchange and helps regulate your heart rate and blood pressure.

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### **3.12 4-7-8 Breathing (Relaxing Breath Technique)**

Inhale through your nose for four seconds. Hold the breath for seven seconds. Exhale slowly and completely through your mouth for eight seconds. Repeat for four breath cycles. This technique is particularly effective in calming the “fight or flight” response and is commonly used to relieve anxiety and improve sleep.

### 3.13 Box Breathing (Square Breathing)

Inhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, and hold again for four seconds. Visualize each phase as a side of a square. This technique is widely used for focus and stress reduction and is helpful in stabilizing breathing during anxious moments. Choose a technique and try it for a few minutes. Observe how your body feels before and after. You may notice slower breathing, relaxed muscles, or clearer thinking. Like any skill, breathwork becomes more effective with practice.

### Optional: Breathing Exercise Log

Day	Technique	Duration	How I Felt
Monday	4-7-8 Breathing	5 Minutes	Calmer and more focused
Tuesday	Belly Breathing	3 Minutes	Less Tense and more grounded
Wednesday	Box Breathing	5 Minutes	Fell Asleep more easily

## 3.2 Nature Connection: Grounding in the Natural World

When we feel disconnected from the environment, reconnecting with nature, even briefly, can provide a powerful sense of calm and perspective. Studies show that time in green spaces reduces cortisol levels, lowers anxiety, and improves mood. Whether you live in an urban or rural area, you can find ways to connect with nature.

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### 3.21 5-4-3-2-1 Senses Exercise

Use your five senses to ground yourself in the present moment. Find a quiet outdoor space or sit by an open window. Identify:

- 5 things you can see
- 
- 4 sounds you can hear
- 
- 3 things you can touch
- 
- 2 things you can smell
- 

1 thing you can taste (if safe)

This sensory awareness can reduce anxiety and bring you back into your body.

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### 3.22 Sit Spot Mindfulness

Choose a regular spot outdoors where you can sit quietly for 5–10 minutes. Simply observe your surroundings, light, sound, movement, animals, plants. Let yourself just “be” in that space. Over time, this spot may become a place of comfort and familiarity.

## 3.23 Grounding with Earth (Literal Grounding)

If safe and appropriate, take off your shoes and stand or walk barefoot on natural ground. As you breathe, imagine stress flowing out through your feet into the Earth. This simple practice helps stabilize and calm the nervous system by reconnecting with physical reality.

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## 3.24 Tree Visualization

If you cannot go outside, close your eyes and imagine yourself as a tree. Visualize your feet as roots grounding into the earth, your body as a sturdy trunk, and your arms as branches reaching upward. Breathe in strength and stability; breathe out stress and worry. This imagery can provide a sense of rootedness and calm.

Take note of which nature-based activities feel helpful. You might find yourself returning to a favorite tree, a rooftop view, or even the simple act of caring for a houseplant. The key is not the setting but the intention to connect with something steady, living, and real.

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## 3.3 Movement and Body Release

Anxiety and emotional tension often accumulate in the body. Movement helps release that buildup. This does not need to be intense exercise; the goal is to move in a way that supports emotional processing.

## **3.31 Shake It Out**

Set a timer for one to two minutes. Shake your hands, arms, legs, and head. Move your body freely and with energy. Shaking helps discharge stress and bring your nervous system back into balance.

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## **3.32 Climate Dance or Movement Journey**

Put on a song that reflects how you want to feel. Move your body to it, stretch, sway, dance, or express emotions through motion. Set an intention: “I release frustration,” or “I invite calm.” This can be joyful or reflective and is a way to express emotions physically.

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## **3.33 Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

Lie down or sit comfortably. Starting from your feet and moving upward, tense each muscle group for five seconds, then release. Move through: toes, calves, thighs, glutes, stomach, hands, arms, shoulders, face. This systematic release helps calm your body and is especially useful before sleep.

## 3.34 Outdoor Movement

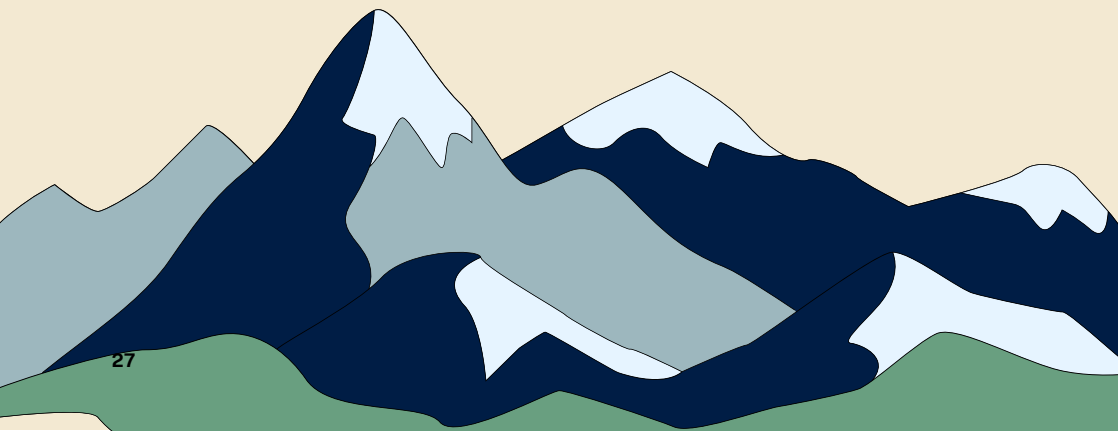
Engage in light activity such as walking, biking, or stretching outdoors. Some youth combine exercise with environmental action, such as “plogging” (picking up litter while jogging). Movement outdoors provides both emotional relief and a renewed sense of purpose.

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## 3.35 Reflection

After trying one or more of these techniques, take a moment to journal. What helped? What felt challenging? What might you do differently next time? Developing your self-awareness around what grounds you will help you create your own set of coping strategies.

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# YOUR CLIMATE CALM TOOLKIT



You now have several tools for responding to stress:

- **Breathwork** to regulate your nervous system
- **Nature connection** to ground yourself in the present
- **Movement** to release emotions and restore balance

You can combine these into a personal calming routine. For example: 'When I feel overwhelmed, I step outside, use 5-4-3-2-1, then do 4-7-8 breathing.' Having a plan can help you act quickly and compassionately when climate anxiety arises.

Taking care of your mental and physical well-being is not a luxury, it is essential. You are building the emotional resilience needed to face the climate crisis without burning out.

End of Session 3. In the next session, we shift our focus from inward reflection to outward action: how to design a climate wellness campaign and turn care into change.



# **SESSION 4: FROM ANXIETY TO ACTION – YOUTH-LED CLIMATE WELLNESS CAMPAIGNS**



# OBJECTIVE

THIS SESSION SHIFTS THE FOCUS FROM INTERNAL REFLECTION TO EXTERNAL ACTION. ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO RESPOND TO CLIMATE DESPAIR IS TO TAKE MEANINGFUL STEPS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SOLUTIONS OR SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE. ACTION PROVIDES A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AGENCY, AND HOPE. AS THE SAYING GOES, “ACTION IS THE ANTIDOTE TO DESPAIR.”

In this session, you will begin designing a youth-led climate wellness campaign or project. This could include launching a peer support group for youth with eco-anxiety, developing a social media education series, organizing a nature-based community event, or planning a mural project that expresses climate-related emotions. The core ingredients of your campaign should be: youth leadership, a focus on emotional or mental well-being, and a connection to climate or environmental themes.

Research shows that young people involved in collective climate action report fewer symptoms of depression than those who feel alone in their concern. In Canada, more than half of youth surveyed believe they personally can make a difference. This session will show you that you can. Whether your campaign is big or small, your voice and your ideas matter.



## 4.1 BRAINSTORMING YOUR CAMPAIGN IDEA



Begin with reflection. What are the climate and wellness issues that feel most urgent or meaningful to you? Use the following guiding questions to spark ideas:

- What climate or environmental issue do I care deeply about?
- What emotional or mental health challenges have I noticed among my peers related to that issue?
- What kind of project or campaign could help address both?

Take out a notebook or blank page and free-write or sketch a mind map of possible ideas. Do not worry about how realistic or detailed your ideas are yet. Focus on creativity, honesty, and passion.



## 4.1 BRAINSTORMING YOUR CAMPAIGN IDEA



Here are examples of real or inspired youth-led projects:

- **Climate Wellness Club:** Weekly meetings that combine climate education with wellness practices like journaling or meditation.
- **Land-Based Healing Weekend:** Organized by Indigenous youth, this program connects teens to the land through traditional knowledge and outdoor survival skills.
- **'Climate Feelz' Social Media Series:** An Instagram project featuring portraits and quotes from youth about how climate change makes them feel and what they are doing to cope or act.
- **Climate Cafés:** Informal gatherings to discuss climate emotions in a relaxed space with tea or snacks, often co-hosted with mental health partners.
- **Youth Theatre Play:** A creative performance that blends facts, stories, and humor to explore climate anxiety and resilience.
- **Peer Text Line:** A student-run peer support initiative focused on eco-anxiety, offering listening and guidance in a non-judgmental space.



## 4.1 BRAINSTORMING YOUR CAMPAIGN IDEA



When choosing an idea to move forward with, consider:

- Is it personally meaningful to you?
  - Does it meet a real need in your school or community?
  - Is it feasible to carry out with the resources and time available?
  - Is it engaging or welcoming to other youth?
- Once you have selected an idea, move into planning.



## 4.2 CAMPAIGN PLANNING TEMPLATE



### Planning Element

Campaign Name

Goal or Purpose

Target Group

Main Activities

Team and Roles

Resources

Needed

Timeline

Potential

Challenges &

Solutions

Success Metrics

Partners and

Support

### Your Campaign Details

(e.g., “Green Minds Connect”)

(e.g., “To provide a space for youth to share climate emotions”)

(e.g., “Grade 9–12 students at my school”)

(e.g., “Art mural, monthly support circles, open mic night”)

(e.g., Coordinator, Art Lead, Facilitators, Social Media Manager)

(e.g., space, supplies, snacks, speaker, funding)

(e.g., October–April, with monthly events and a final celebration)

(e.g., “Low turnout – offer snacks and promote through clubs”)

(e.g., “10+ participants, survey feedback shows increased hope”)

(e.g., school staff, mental health organizations, youth groups).



## 4.2 CAMPAIGN PLANNING TEMPLATE



### Example Campaign: 'Eco-Emotions Express'

- **Name:** Eco-Emotions Express
- **Goal:** Help students express their climate-related emotions and turn them into creative action.
- **Target Group:** Students in Grades 9–12 at Greenwood High.
- **Activities:** Monthly discussion circle, collaborative art mural, Instagram storytelling page, and an Earth Day event with guest speakers.
- **Team:** Alex (Coordinator), Sam (Art Lead), Jordan (Social Media), Priya and Lee (Facilitators), supported by Ms. Nguyen (Teacher Mentor).
- **Resources:** Meeting space, mural materials, posters, snacks, speaker.
- **Timeline:** September planning, October–March programming, April Earth Day event.
- **Challenges:** Emotional topics – solution: have counselor support and structure sessions with clear boundaries.
- **Success:** At least 15 students participate, mural completed, students report feeling less alone.

**Partners:** School Environment Club, Art Department, local mental health clinic.



## 4.3 TIPS FOR SUCCESS



### Start Small

It is okay to begin with five participants or a single event. Impact is not always about size. Meaningful change often begins in small circles.

### Collaborate with Others

Work with friends, peers, clubs, or mentors. Assign roles, respect each other's strengths, and support one another. Teamwork builds confidence and connection.

### Adapt as Needed

Be flexible. If an activity is not working, adjust it. Collect feedback. Mistakes are part of learning. Each experience adds to your skills and resilience.

### Focus on Wellness

Balance realism with optimism. Acknowledge the seriousness of climate issues but always include solutions, coping tools, and opportunities for joy and expression.

### Be Inclusive

Create a space where everyone feels welcome, regardless of background or identity. Use inclusive language, consider diverse perspectives, and respect lived experiences, particularly from communities most affected by climate change.

### Celebrate Progress

Celebrate every milestone. Whether it is your first event or a successful campaign wrap-up, take time to reflect on what you achieved. Consider documenting your journey through photos, stories, or a short write-up.



## 4.3 TIPS FOR SUCCESS



### Start Small

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## 4.4 CAMPAIGN KICKSTART WORKSHEET



Use the prompts below to help get started on your campaign idea:

• Issue I care about most:  
-----

• Main idea for my campaign:  
-----

• Who can I ask to help?  
-----

• One action I can take this week to get started:  
-----

• One concern I have and how I might address it:  
-----

This worksheet can be a useful tool to move from thinking to doing. Start small, talk to a friend, write a message, sketch a logo, and build from there.



# REAL-WORLD INSPIRATION



Across Canada and the world, youth are leading the way in climate resilience and emotional support. Organizations like 'Be The Change Earth Alliance' have developed toolkits for emotional well-being.

University students in Montreal created a peer support group focused on eco-anxiety. Global movements like Fridays for Future have inspired both action and care.

Research supports what these youth already know: collective action can reduce feelings of isolation and increase hope. According to a national survey, seventy-one percent of Canadian youth believe that together, we can make a difference.

By designing and launching your own campaign, you are joining this wave of change. Whether your impact is local or wide-reaching, it is real.

End of Session 4. You have taken the step from reflection to action. In the next session, we will focus on community care and sustainable support, how to keep showing up for yourself and others as we continue facing the climate crisis together.

# Session 05

## Community Care and Peer Support





## **Objective:**

In this final session, we focus on building supportive relationships. Climate change is a long-term challenge, and so is caring for your mental health while engaging with it. One of the most important things you can do is surround yourself with people who understand, listen, and walk alongside you. You do not need to face this alone. Today we will explore how to create a sense of community, support one another through regular check-ins, and know when it is time to ask for professional help. By the end of this session, you will have practical strategies to strengthen peer support and create spaces where everyone feels heard and valued.

# FINDING COMUNNNITY

Sharing how you feel with someone who truly listens can be one of the most healing experiences. In earlier sessions, we discussed how common climate-related emotions are. Peer support brings that to life. Whether through texting a friend who understands what you are going through or sitting in a circle and expressing how recent climate news made you feel, opening up helps lighten the load. Mental health research shows that talking with others who have similar experiences can ease feelings of isolation and build resilience. Even simple messages like “I saw the wildfires on the news and felt overwhelmed” and receiving a reply like “Same here, want to chat about it?” can make a big difference.

You can also create regular habits around peer support. Try a climate check-in with a friend or group. Ask each other once a week, “How are you feeling about climate stuff lately?” Let the answers be honest and different each time. One day you may feel motivated; another, you might need a break. You can share articles, talk over voice notes, or meet in person. Consistency and care are key. It is not about fixing each other’s problems — it is about listening with empathy.





If you are looking for more structure, consider creating a group support format that works for you. One example is a sharing circle, where each person gets a chance to speak while others listen without interrupting. Some youth use a talking object, something passed around so everyone knows whose turn it is. These circles can be powerful spaces where stories are shared and bonds are strengthened. You might ask a guiding question like “What is one climate feeling that stood out to you this week?” and go around. Remember to set group agreements like confidentiality, kindness, and permission to pass if someone is not ready to share.

Another approach is to pair up with someone in a buddy system. You can agree to check in with each other every so often, just to ask, “How are you doing?” or to share something climate-related that has been on your mind. Buddies can rotate every few months, especially in larger groups, to make sure everyone is connected. These small check-ins help people feel seen and supported.

You can also practice empathy skills with each other through role-playing. Take turns practicing how to respond to a friend who is feeling anxious or overwhelmed. Learn to reflect back what they are saying, rather than trying to fix it. Instead of offering quick advice like “Do not worry, it will be fine,” try saying “I get why that made you feel upset. That makes sense.” Listening without judgment is a powerful act. The goal is not to erase emotions but to meet them with understanding.

Group activities that bring comfort and calm can also help build connection. You might start meetings with a breathing exercise or end them by sharing a “rose, thorn, and bud”—a highlight, a challenge, and something you are hopeful for. This quick activity is used in many youth programs to check in emotionally while staying grounded in positivity. Or you could hold monthly gatherings focused solely on well-being: no planning, no pressure, just time to relax together, whether that means playing games, taking a walk in nature, or simply hanging out and recharging.

To help keep conversations going, here are some check-in prompts you can use with friends or in group settings:

- “If your mood were a weather pattern today, what would it be?”
- “What is something that made you smile this week, and something that weighed on you?”
- “What is one climate-related thought you had recently?”
- “What song feels like your mood lately?”
- “What is one self-care thing you have done or want to try?”
- “Who is someone in the climate movement who inspires you?”

These kinds of questions help people open up without pressure. You might also start a shared resource document where group members drop in links to uplifting news, support services, or climate events. Having a place to turn for hope or information can make a big difference.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Even with strong peer support, there are times when it is important to talk to a professional. If you or a friend are feeling hopeless, stuck in sadness, or are having trouble functioning in daily life, it is okay to seek more help. There is no shame in asking for support. In fact, it is a strength. Resources like Kids Help Phone are available 24/7. You can call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868 to speak to someone trained to help. This is a safe, confidential space to talk about anything, including eco-anxiety. There are also local programs like Youth Wellness Hubs in Ontario or Foundry in British Columbia, where you can find mental health support tailored to young people.

Make it normal in your circles to talk about reaching out for help. Saying, “I called a counselor last week and it helped” might be the nudge someone else needs. Even just one or two professional conversations can offer relief and new tools to cope. Climate grief, anxiety, and burnout are real, and you do not have to carry them alone.

As we wrap up this toolkit, remember that this is not a final chapter. It is a starting point for ongoing growth and care. Keep checking in with yourself through journaling and self-reflection. Use your emotion maps and wheels to track how you are feeling. Practice grounding exercises when emotions run high.

Carry forward your climate wellness campaign with a sense of purpose, but also with balance. Stay connected with your community and keep supporting one another. Periodically ask yourself and those around you, “How are we doing with all this?” That simple question can open a doorway to healing and hope.

To help you along the way, here is a quick list of youth mental health supports: Kids Help Phone (Canada-wide): 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868 – free, 24/7 support in English and French

Crisis Services Canada: 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645 (4pm–12am EST)

Anxiety Canada: [anxietycanada.com](https://anxietycanada.com): resources and strategies for coping with anxiety

Climate Mental Health Network: tools like the Climate Emotions Wheel and educator resources

You have come a long way through this journey. By naming your feelings, building strategies, taking action, and learning to support yourself and others, you have built something powerful. Keep going. Keep growing. And remember, you are not alone.



# CONCLUSION: HOPE AND RESILIENCE

Let's end where all change begins, with hope. The climate crisis is undeniably daunting. It can stir up feelings of grief, helplessness, and anxiety. But in the midst of that uncertainty, there is also something steady and powerful: you. You and your generation bring awareness, urgency, and a vision for justice that is already reshaping the world. And now, you've added another essential layer, a commitment to caring for your mind, heart, and community.

Mental wellness is not a separate path from activism; it's the foundation that allows us to keep showing up. Taking care of your emotional health isn't selfish, it's strategic. It means you're investing in the strength and sustainability of the climate movement. When we tend to ourselves and each other, we make the work more durable. We make the future more possible

Remember that survey we talked about earlier? The one where 71% of youth said they believe in the power of collective action? That matters. When despair creeps in, it helps to remember you are not alone. Somewhere out there, another teenager is feeling the same knot in their stomach after reading climate news. But maybe they're also planting a tree, creating a mural, hosting a community meeting, or checking in on a friend. You're part of that same web. A community that spans neighborhoods, provinces, and continents, holding each other up, even from afar.

In moments of doubt, revisit what brought you here. Reread your "Why I Care" reflection from Session 1. Reflect on how your relationship with your emotions has changed. You've learned to name and understand what you're feeling. You've practiced calming techniques, explored creative expression, started designing action plans, and discovered the strength of community. These aren't just tools for climate anxiety, they're tools for navigating life.



# CONCLUSION:

## HOPE AND RESILIENCE

It's also important to remember that these "hard" emotions, the worry, the grief, the anger — mean something. They are evidence that you care deeply. As researcher Dr. Lindsay Galway reminds us, these feelings are appropriate. They come from love. Love for people, for nature, for fairness, for the future. There is no shame in feeling them. And now, with the skills and supports you've gathered, you can meet those feelings with compassion and turn them into action, creativity, and connection.

So keep this toolkit close. Revisit it when you need grounding or inspiration. Share it with friends, adapt it to fit your world, and carry its lessons into whatever spaces you enter, whether you're at a protest, in a classroom, on a walk in the woods, or just talking with someone who needs to feel less alone. You are not alone. You are resilient. You are part of the solution. Thank you for engaging with the Climate Wellness Toolkit for Youth. We encourage you to print it or save it as a PDF so you can complete the worksheets and revisit the reflections. If you're using or sharing this toolkit in a project or presentation, please remember to credit GreenMind and cite any referenced content. We're cheering you on — as you continue to nurture your wellbeing, inspire your community, and help grow a future rooted in care. Take a breath. Take a step. Keep going. The planet needs you — and it needs you to take care of you, too.

Remember that survey we talked about earlier? The one where 71% of youth said they believe in the power of collective action? That matters. When despair creeps in, it helps to remember you are not alone. Somewhere out there, another teenager is feeling the same knot in their stomach after reading climate news. But maybe they're also planting a tree, creating a mural, hosting a community meeting, or checking in on a friend. You're part of that same web. A community that spans neighborhoods, provinces, and continents, holding each other up, even from afar.

# MEET OUR TEAM



**Inaam Chattha**



**Raheen Fatima**



**Ahmad Chattha**



**Jashan Gill**