

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MENTAL HEALTH

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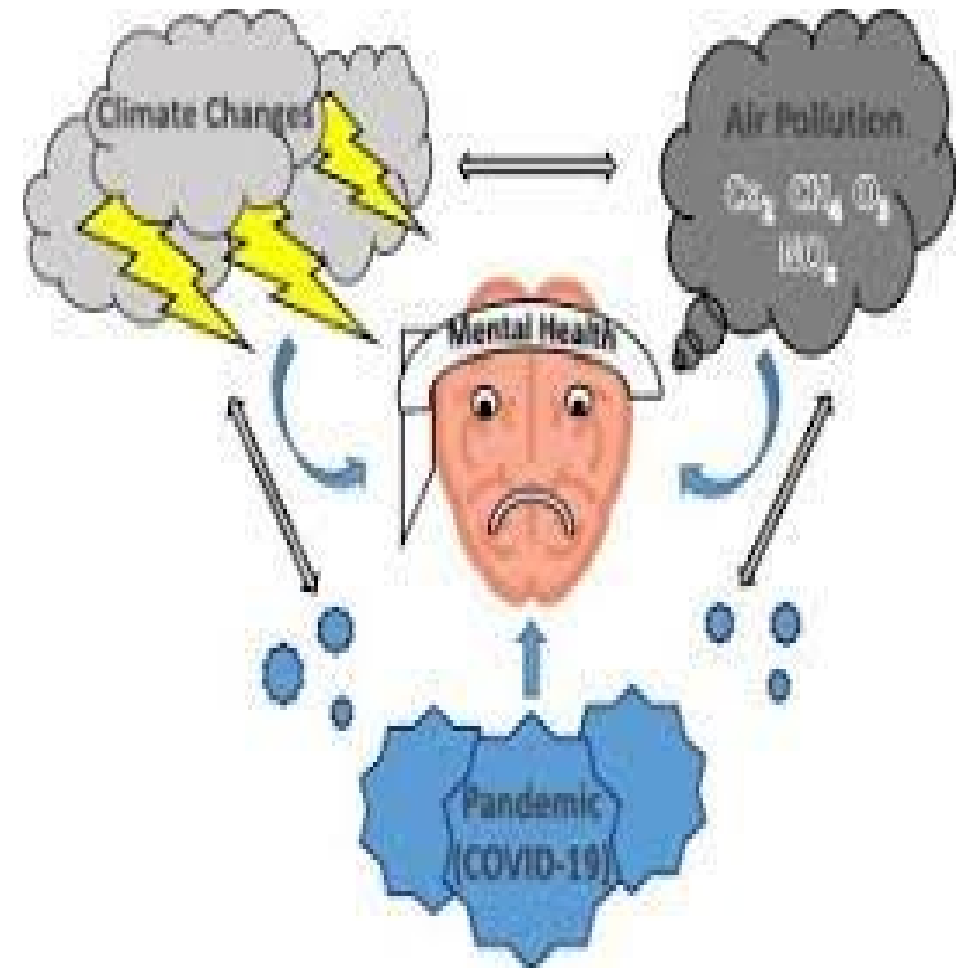


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Outline

- Introduction
- Impact of climate change on human health
- Impacts of Climate Change on Mental Health
- Psychological Distress
- Anxiety and depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

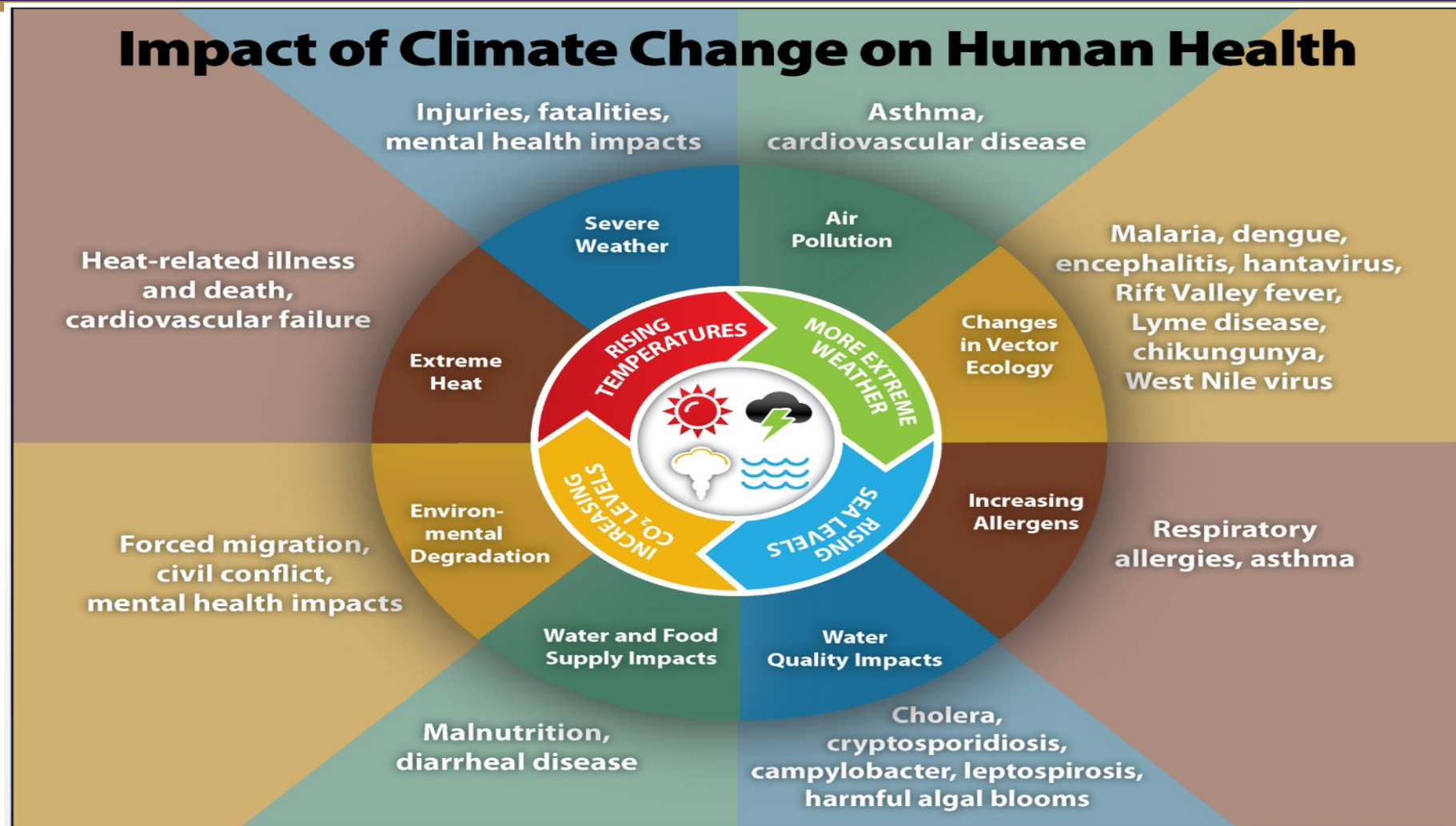


Introduction

- Climate change has emerged **as a global crisis** with far-reaching implications for **human health and well-being**.
- Physical and environmental consequences of climate change are well-documented.
- **Impact on mental health** is increasingly recognized.

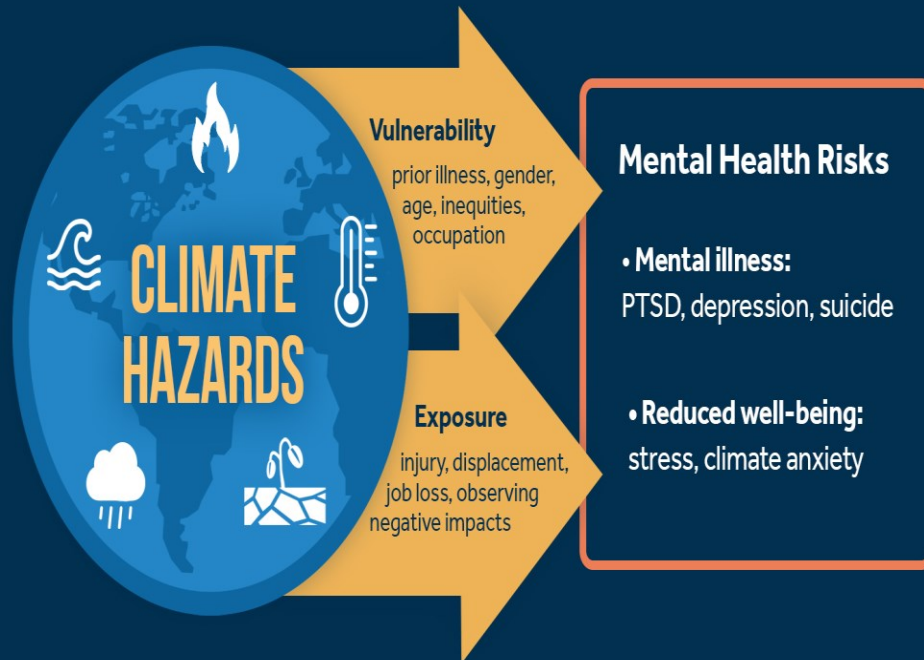


Impact of climate change on human health



Impacts of Climate Change on Mental Health

Climate Change & Mental Health



Source: Adapted from IPCC AR6 WGII Ch 7 (2022) & health2016.globalchange.gov Ch 8 (2016).

CLIMATE CENTRAL

- Psychological Distress
- Anxiety and depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

(A) Psychological Distress

- Climate change-related events, such as...
 - extreme weather events,
 - natural disasters, and
 - displacement,
- Have psychological distress and trauma (Berry et al., 2018).
- Witnessing or experiencing ...
 - the destruction of homes,
 - loss of livelihoods, and
 - the displacement of communities
- Have long-lasting psychological effects.

Link between Climate Change and Psychological Distress



- Direct and Indirect Impacts
- Eco-Anxiety and Ecological Grief
- Threats to Well-being and Quality of Life

Direct and Indirect Impacts

- Climate change-related events, such as ...
 - extreme weather events,
 - natural disasters, and
 - resource scarcity,
- Have direct impacts on individuals
- Directly causes distress due to loss, displacement, and trauma (Clayton et al., 2017).

Direct and Indirect Impacts

- Indirectly, climate change contributes to anxiety and distress through ...
 - the perception of future risks,
 - uncertainty, and
 - environmental degradation.

Eco-Anxiety and Ecological Grief



- Growing awareness of climate change and its consequences has led to the emergence of eco-anxiety and ecological grief (Berry et al., 2018).
 - **Eco-anxiety:** Chronic fear or worry about the environmental crisis
 - **Ecological grief:** Emotional response to the loss of ecosystems and species.

Threats to Well-being and Quality of Life

- Climate change impacts various aspects of well-being, including...
 - physical health,
 - social connections, and
 - economic stability.
- The erosion of these factors can lead to chronic stress, depression, and a diminished sense of purpose and meaning in life (Reser et al., 2019).

Threats to Well-being and Quality of Life



- Vulnerable populations, such as
 - low-income communities and
 - indigenous groups,
- ... are disproportionately affected.

Implications of Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress



- Mental Health Disorders
- Impaired Coping and Resilience
- Social Disruption and Conflict

Implications of Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress

Mental Health Disorders:

- Climate change can exacerbate the prevalence and severity of mental health disorders, including
 - **anxiety** disorders,
 - **depression**, and
 - **post-traumatic stress** disorder (PTSD) (Kessler et al., 2020).
- The experience of climate-related events and ongoing stressors can contribute to the **development or worsening** of these conditions.

Implications of Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress

Impaired Coping and Resilience:

- Psychological distress resulting from climate change can **hinder individuals' ability to cope** with future challenges and adapt to changing circumstances (Clayton et al., 2017).
- This can **compromise resilience and limit the capacity** to effectively respond to climate-related stressors.

Implications of Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress

Social Disruption and Conflict:

- Climate change-induced psychological distress can ...
 - strain **social relationships**,
 - **disrupt communities**, and
 - contribute to **conflicts** (Berry et al., 2018).
- Displacement, resource competition, and changes in social dynamics can amplify existing tensions and lead to psychological distress at both individual and community levels.

Addressing Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress



- Climate-Informed Mental Health Services
- Building Psychological Resilience
- Advocacy and Policy Action

Addressing Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress

Climate-Informed Mental Health Services:

- Incorporating climate change and its psychological impacts into mental health services is crucial (Clayton et al., 2017).
- Mental health professionals can provide
 - **support**,
 - **psychoeducation**, and
 - **evidence-based interventions**
- tailored to individuals experiencing climate-related distress.

Addressing Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress

Building Psychological Resilience:

- Enhancing **individual and community resilience** is essential for coping with climate-related psychological distress.
- This includes ...
 - promoting adaptive coping strategies,
 - fostering social connections, and
 - providing access to resources that support well-being and mental health (Reser et al., 2019).

Addressing Climate Change-Related Psychological Distress

Advocacy and Policy Action:

- Advocating for **policy changes**, **climate action**, and **sustainability measures** can reduce the psychological burden associated with climate change (Berry et al., 2018).
- Engaging in **collective efforts** to mitigate climate change and **promote sustainable practices** can provide individuals with a sense of agency and hope.

(B) Anxiety and Depression

- Climate change contributes to increased anxiety and depression
- This is fueled by ...
 - uncertainty about the future,
 - ecological grief, and
 - the loss of natural environments and species (Clayton et al., 2017).
- Concerns about the impact of climate change on personal and community well-being can significantly affect mental health.

Effect of Climate Change on Anxiety and Depression



- Climate-Related Stressors
- Eco-Anxiety
- Loss of Ecological Systems

Effect of Climate Change on Anxiety and Depression

Climate-Related Stressors:

- Climate change-related stressors, such as ...
 - extreme weather events,
 - natural disasters, and
 - changes in environmental conditions,
- ...can trigger anxiety and depression (Berry et al., 2018).
- The fear of potential harm, loss, and uncertainty associated with these events **(eg. Earthquake in Turkey)** can significantly impact mental well-being.

Effect of Climate Change on Anxiety and Depression

Eco-Anxiety:

- The growing awareness of climate change and its consequences has led to the emergence of eco-anxiety ...
 - the **chronic worry, distress, and fear** about the environmental crisis (Clayton et al., 2017).
- Individuals experiencing eco-anxiety may feel **overwhelmed by the scale of the problem** and the perceived lack of effective solutions.

Effect of Climate Change on Anxiety and Depression

Loss of Ecological Systems:

- The **loss of ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural environments** due to climate change
- Leads to feelings of sadness, grief, and depression (Reser et al., 2019).
- The **degradation of the natural world**, coupled with concerns about the future, can have a profound impact on mental health.

Implications of Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

- Increased Mental Health Burden
- Disproportionate Impacts on Vulnerable Populations
- Interactions with Other Factors



Implications of Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

Increased Mental Health Burden:

- Climate change-related anxiety and depression can **add to the existing burden** of mental health disorders.
- The **prevalence and severity of anxiety and depression** may rise as climate change continues to impact communities (Clayton et al., 2017).

Implications of Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

Disproportionate Impacts on Vulnerable Populations:

- Vulnerable populations, including
 - **low-income** communities,
 - **indigenous** groups, and
 - those living in **climate-affected regions**,
- ...are particularly susceptible to the mental health impacts of climate change (Berry et al., 2018).
- **Social inequalities and limited access** to resources exacerbate the effects of climate-related anxiety and depression.

Implications of Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

Interactions with Other Factors:

- Climate change-related anxiety and depression can interact with other ...
 - **social, economic, and personal** factors -
- ... compounding their impact on mental health (Reser et al., 2019).
- **Poverty, displacement, and social disruptions** resulting from climate change can further exacerbate mental health challenges.

Addressing Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

- Climate-Informed Mental Health Services
- Public Awareness and Education
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation



Addressing Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

Climate-Informed Mental Health Services:

- Mental health professionals can play a crucial role in addressing climate change-related anxiety and depression by **providing climate-informed care**.
- This involves recognizing the impact of climate change on mental health, integrating **climate-related stressors** into **assessments and treatment plans**, and offering **appropriate support** (Clayton et al., 2017).

Addressing Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

Public Awareness and Education:

- **Raising public awareness** about the mental health impacts of climate change is essential.
- **Education campaigns** can help individuals
 - understand the connections between climate change and mental health,
 - foster resilience, and
 - promote adaptive coping strategies (Berry et al., 2018).

Addressing Climate Change-Related Anxiety and Depression

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:

- Taking effective action to mitigate climate change and promote adaptation measures can contribute to reducing anxiety and depression related to climate change.
 - Engaging in sustainable practices,
 - supporting renewable energy, and
 - advocating for policy changes
- These can alleviate feelings of helplessness and provide a sense of empowerment (Reser et al., 2019).

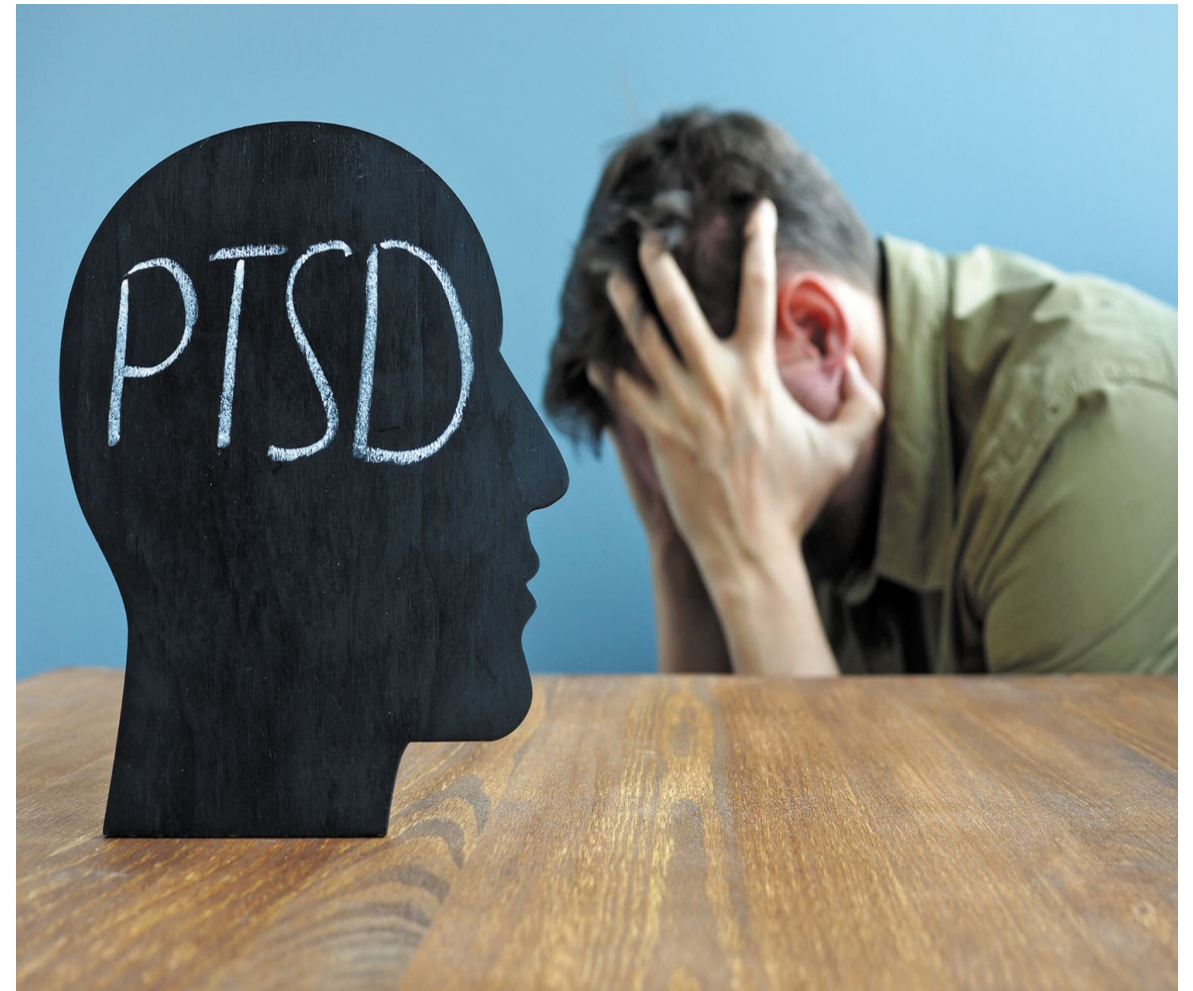
(C) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Exposure to climate-related traumatic events, such as ...
 - **hurricanes, floods, or wildfires**, ...
- .. can result in PTSD symptoms, including intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and hyperarousal (Kessler et al., 2020).
- The loss of **homes, possessions, and loved ones** can have **long-term psychological consequences**.



The Effect of Climate Change on PTSD

- Exposure to Climate-Related Traumatic Events
- Loss and Grief
- Chronic Stress and Uncertainty



The Effect of Climate Change on PTSD

Exposure to Climate-Related Traumatic Events:

- Climate change leads to an increase in the **frequency and intensity of extreme weather events:**
 - **hurricanes, floods, and wildfires.**
- Individuals directly affected by these events, witnessing their aftermath or experiencing displacement, are at **risk of developing PTSD** (Kessler et al., 2020).
- Traumatic experiences with climate-related events can **have long-lasting psychological effects.**

The Effect of Climate Change on PTSD

Loss and Grief:

- Climate change-related events often result in significant losses,
 - including the **loss of homes**,
 - **possessions**, and
 - even **loved ones**.
- Coupled with the grief and mourning, can contribute to the development or **exacerbation of PTSD symptoms** (Reser et al., 2019).
- The magnitude and scale of **climate change-induced losses** amplify the psychological impact.

The Effect of Climate Change on PTSD

Chronic Stress and Uncertainty:

- Climate change introduces **chronic stress and uncertainty** about the future.
- The ongoing exposure to climate-related stressors, such as ...
 - **rising temperatures,**
 - **changing weather patterns,** and
 - **environmental degradation,**
- ... can contribute to the development of PTSD symptoms (Clayton et al., 2017).
- **Continuous threat and unpredictability** associated with climate change can **erode mental well-being.**

Addressing Climate Change-Related PTSD

- Enhancing Resilience
- Providing Trauma-Informed Care
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation



Conclusion

- Climate change has profound implications for mental health, with impacts ranging from psychological distress to anxiety, depression, and trauma-related disorders.
- Individuals and communities face unique challenges related to loss, displacement, and environmental injustice.

Implementing coping strategies and resilience-building measures, such as ...

- strengthening social support networks,
- providing psychological support, and
- engaging in climate action, individuals and communities

... can mitigate the mental health consequences of climate change.

QUESTIONS?

&

COMMENTS

Take Home Message

- We all must prioritize mental health within climate change discourse
- We as a people must develop comprehensive strategies that address both the environmental and psychological aspects of this global crisis!!!



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THANK

YOU!!!