

Climate anxiety

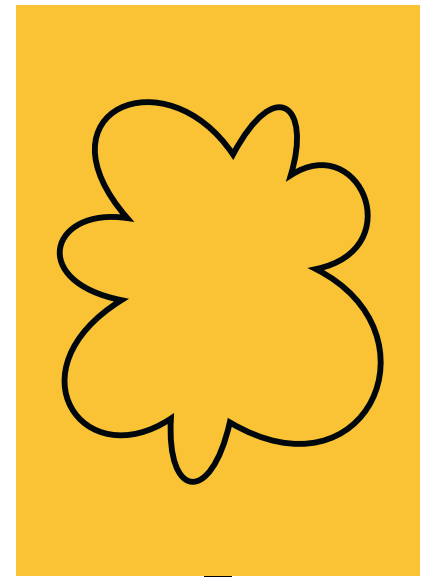
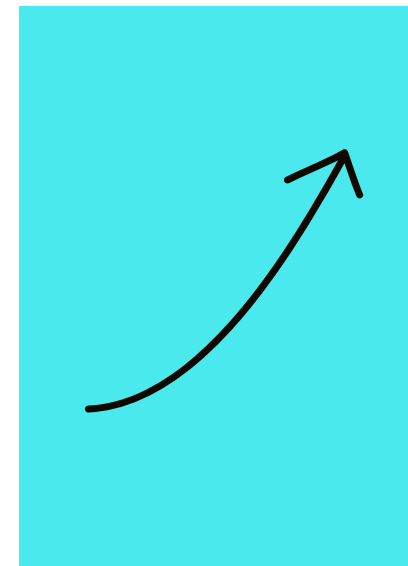
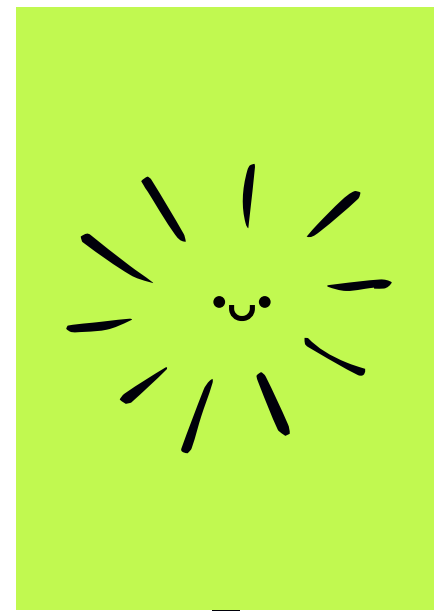
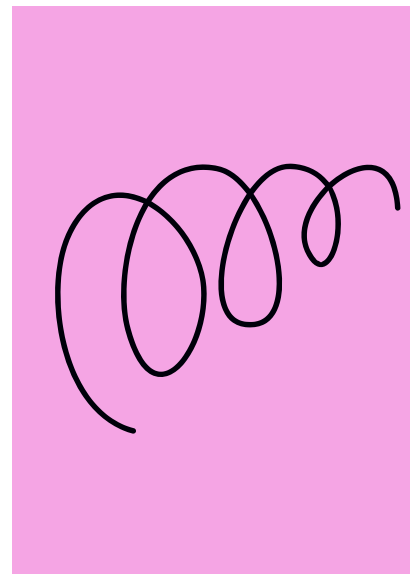
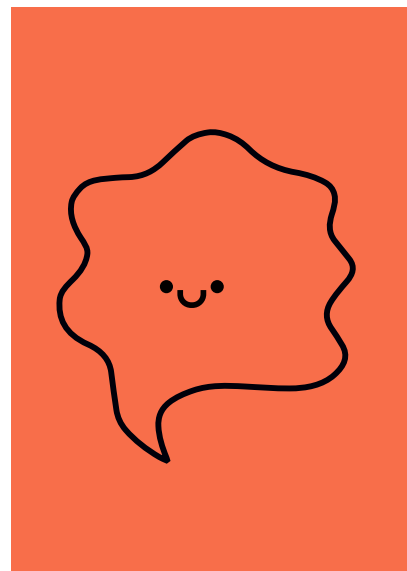
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6 helpful ways to alleviate climate anxiety in young people (& everyone)

6 helpful ways to alleviate climate anxiety amongst young people

The impact of the climate crisis is already impossible to ignore, and the lack of action to invest in a sustainable future means further degradation of our planet is a reality.

Greta Thunberg's famous "blah, blah, blah" speech was a reaction to the younger generation's ignored outcries urging global leaders, policymakers and corporations to go beyond empty rhetoric and take proper action.



The psychological effects associated with the climate crisis are already visible. Studies have found evidence that climate change directly contributes to a rise in clinical disorders in society. Mental health experts are especially concerned about the strain it's having on young people's well-being as they inherit a "disproportionate share of the burden".

A survey analysing 10,000 young people aged 16 to 25 across ten countries found that more than 45% said their worries about climate change negatively affected their daily life. Some 56% stated they believe "humanity is doomed".

Philosopher Glenn Albrecht asserts that this epidemic of eco-paralysis leads young people to feel life is meaningless, inhibiting engagement in everyday activities.

These persistent psychological stressors result in high dropout rates in education, a decline in social endeavours, and health complications that affect cognitive and physical development.

Of course, it's unfair to ask a generation of young people to develop enhanced psychological stamina to face climate change. But we can find strategies that help alleviate climate-related anxiety.

Underpinned by work from leading researchers and practitioners in the field, this guide offers six key strategies that have been shown to ease eco-anxiety in young people.

6 key strategies:

- 1 **Stay truthful**
- 2 **Be there to listen**
- 3 **Do what you can to make a difference**
- 4 **Locate your support network**
- 5 **Seek out good news too**
- 6 **Access the nature on your doorstep**

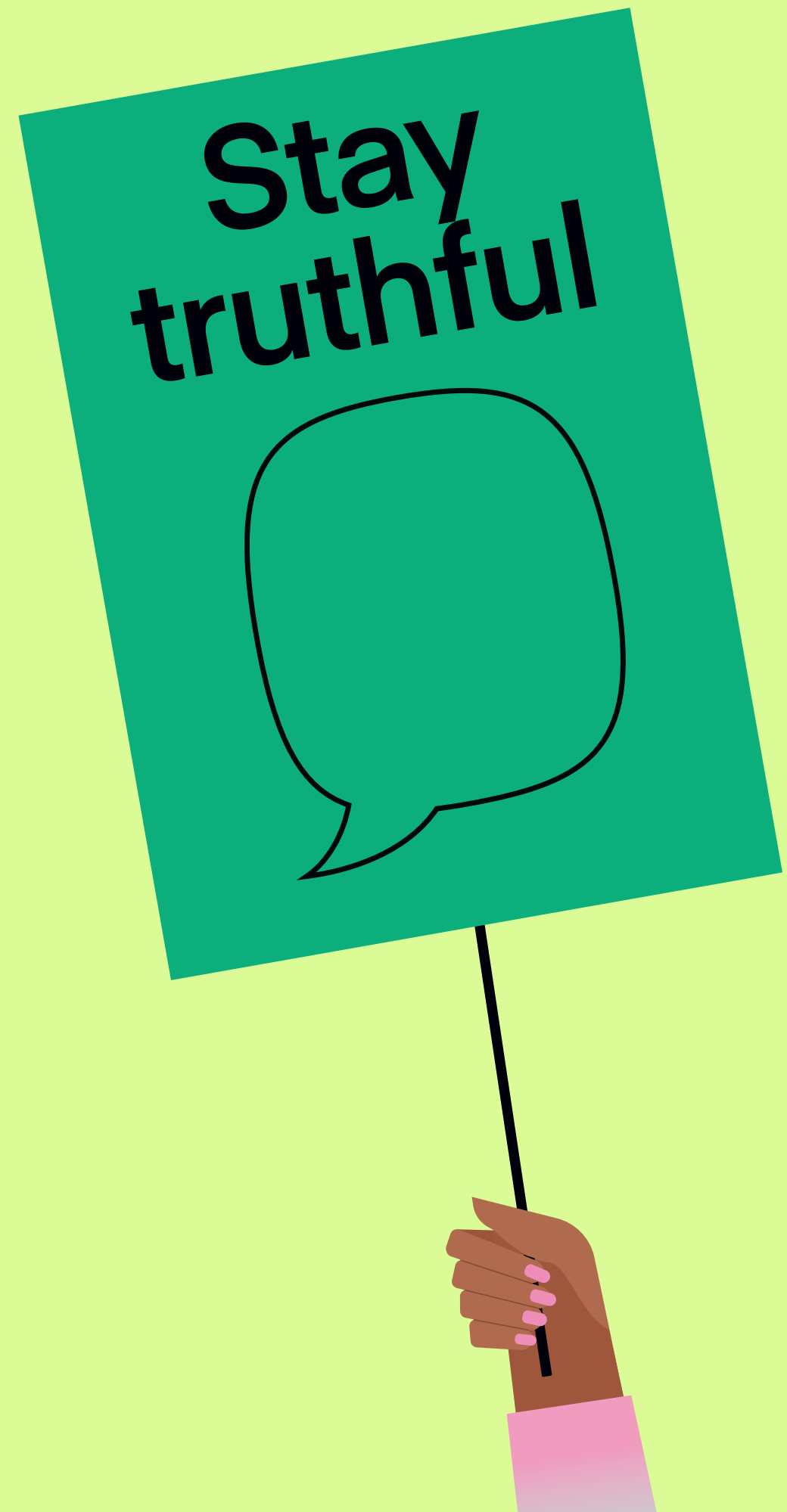
1 Stay truthful

Awareness of man-made climate change may provoke worry and uncertainty; but obscuring the severity of the issue is only doing children and young people a disservice.

A lack of honesty can be interpreted as a denial of the reality of the situation.

Rather than shielding young people, an accurate understanding of climate change is necessary to develop agency and empowerment.

The important thing is to create a space where young people feel comfortable expressing and talking through their emotions as well as asking questions on the topic.



2 Be there to listen

Make sure children and young people can talk about their concerns. Feeling heard strengthens our sense of agency and resilience.

A study conducted with Swedish 12-year-olds found that discussing the climate crisis with others was the most effective strategy for responding to anxieties about it.

The study showed higher behavioural engagement amongst the groups who embedded these practices than those that used other coping methods.

This validated their emotional responses and helped them feel heard, understood, and respected.



3 Do what you can to make a difference

The ability to play a role, however small, in tackling the effects of climate change can result in increased individual well-being.

Climate change is an inherently societal rather than individual issue. But grassroots efforts to mitigate climate change, with the goal of societal well-being, can actually improve an individual's well-being and self-empowerment. They can also lead on to more significant pro-environmental action.

The mantra of 'anxiety to action' is a foundational step in the treatment of those experiencing eco-anxiety. Academics emphasise the importance of engaging in one's goals and ambitions for combating climate change to alleviate these conditions. Hence, parents and carers can support children by facilitating their involvement with activist grassroots organisations and educating them on how they, too, can make a difference.



4 Locate your support network

The anxiety that can characterise a young person's response to climate change is impacted partly by how the community around them is addressing the problem.

Cultivating and maintaining strong social connections is a key need for emotional support. And adolescence is a crucial time when peers surpass parents and carers as the primary source of approval. Social support, especially from peers, plays a decisive role as a protective resource during adversity, improves resilient responses, and buffers against negative mental health outcomes.

It is important for children to find support in their communities, and the adults in their lives should help them foster these connections.



5 Seek out good news too

Most young people consume information online these days, which means regulation of their exposure to sensationalist media is limited at best.

Apocalyptic-style doomsday news contributes to a sense of despair and helplessness.

As an alternative, framing media messages with hope and tangible action may be more conducive to empowerment and positive well-being.

Academics recommend compensating negative climate related facts with positive stories on the subject.



6 Access the nature on your doorstep

For a whole host of reasons, most of us are spending less time outdoors than in the natural world.

Growing evidence shows that prolonged contact with nature has positive health and sustainability benefits. Young people and children who experience anxieties can significantly benefit from interventions using natural spaces as part of a therapeutic approach. Horticultural or wilderness activities in various natural settings may restore a sense of connection to nature, and help us become mindful of the ecosystems we live in.



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We are the global design studio here for brilliant creative that brings change. Focused on environmental impact brands since day one, we help visionary clients make a difference. We partner with brave, ambitious, change-making organisations and businesses that are boldly tackling the world's biggest challenges like climate change.

Anxiety about climate change is something that affects 45% of young people. But it is also something that affects our own team and clients, too. Underpinned by work from leading researchers and practitioners in the field, we hope this guide helps with some coping strategies for climate-related worries.

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