



# MHPSS Bulletin

## September- October

*A bulletin to connect people, networks, and organizations across British Columbia, fostering the sharing of resources and building knowledge in the field of mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Past issues of the bulletin and recordings of Lunch and Learn webinars will be available on our website using the button below.*

Provincial Psychosocial Services

## Education & Learning Opportunities

**New! Public Online Course (Free) by Provincial Psychosocial Services**

- [Eco-Anxiety and Climate Distress](#)

*All courses and trainings listed in this Bulletin are voluntary and intended to provide additional learning opportunities. They do not replace or fulfill any mandatory training requirements set by an organization.*

### Wellness Exchange Series

The Wellness Exchange consists of five one-hour interactive workshops designed to support mental and emotional well-being.

[Register here](#) or **read more information in this flyer (PDF).**

- Problem Solving
  - Tuesday, Oct 7, 2025: 7-8pm (PST)

### Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is intended for anyone interested in learning more about how to provide emotional and practical support during emergencies and crises.

#### Next Sessions:

Weekday: Sept 22 & Wednesday Sept 23, 2025: 830am-12pm PST, register [here](#)

- Thursday, Oct 9, 2025: 12-1pm (PST)
- Positive Activities
  - Tuesday, Oct 14, 2025: 7-8pm (PST)
  - Thursday, Oct 16, 2025: 12-1pm (PST)
- Managing Reactions
  - Tuesday, Oct 21, 2025: 7-8pm (PST)
  - Thursday, Oct 23, 2025: 12-1pm (PST)
- Helpful Thinking
  - Tuesday, Oct 28, 2025: 7-8pm (PST)
  - Thursday, Oct 30, 2025: 12-1pm (PST)
- Healthy Connections
  - Tuesday, Nov 4, 2025: 7-8pm (PST)
  - Thursday, Nov 6, 2025: 12-1pm (PST)

Weekend: Sept 27 & Oct 4, 2025: 9am-1pm PST, register [here](#)

*(please note that due to high interest, registration on this form does not guarantee spot – a confirmation email will be sent when your spot is secured).*

## Lunch and Learn Webinar

**October 29 at Noon**

**Dr. Kati Corlew: Trauma-Informed Emergency Management**

In the field of Community Psychology, one strong area of study is psychological sense of community (PSOC) and its connection to individual and community wellbeing. Vulnerable and marginalized communities often have a different relationship to their community during times of calm; this can be exacerbated in times of crisis. Trauma-Informed Emergency Management (TEM) can provide insight into the necessity of community connection during crisis to aid in recovery and resilience.

Following this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Explain and apply the components of psychological sense of community (PSOC)
- Analyze the complex interactions of positive versus negative, and weak versus strong PSOC in vulnerable and marginalized populations
- Understand the principles of Trauma-Informed Emergency Management (TEM)
- Describe the role of community connection in crisis response and recovery

Dr. Laura Kate (Kati) Corlew is a Community and Cultural Psychologist whose expertise includes the psychology of disaster and climate change, and social justice issues such as racism and discrimination against the poor. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Maine at Augusta, she was a community researcher on disaster and climate change preparedness in the Pacific Islands region. She lives in Hampden, ME with her husband and two good dogs.

[Register Here](#)

**All previous Lunch and Learn videos are hosted on our website on the**

Email Nikki to get added directly to the distribution list for all future webinar invitations [edu.pps@phsa.ca](mailto:edu.pps@phsa.ca)

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## Engaging and Useful Links to Explore

### Resources in British Columbia

British Columbians have access to resources that address eco-anxiety directly:

- **Here to Help BC** – Offers clear, practical information and coping strategies tailored to eco-anxiety in a BC context.

Website: <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/eco-anxiety-and-how-t...>

- **Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance (MHCCA)** – Connects individuals with mental health professionals who specialize in climate-related distress.

Website: [www.mhcca.ca](http://www.mhcca.ca)

- **EcoAnxious.ca** – A Canadian initiative sharing personal stories, resources, and tools for navigating climate emotions.

Website: [www.ecoanxious.ca](http://www.ecoanxious.ca)

- **UBC Climate Wellbeing Resource Kit** – A resource from the University of British Columbia to help educators, youth, and communities address climate anxiety through guided activities and dialogue.

Website: <https://ubccclimatehub.ca/project/climate-wellbeing-resource-..>

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## Eco-Anxiety: Recognizing It, Responding to It

Author: Nikki Fowler, RN

Climate change is no longer an abstract prediction of the future—it is unfolding in real time. Across the globe, communities are witnessing the consequences: unprecedented wildfires, floods, droughts, melting ice sheets, and increasingly unstable weather. These changes not only threaten ecosystems and infrastructure but also weigh heavily on the human mind.

In recent years, the term *eco-anxiety* (also called climate anxiety or climate distress) has gained traction. Eco-anxiety refers to the intense worry, fear, or grief that arises from awareness of climate change and its consequences. It has been described as “a

chronic fear of environmental doom.” Unlike medicalized anxiety disorders, eco-anxiety is not considered an illness—it is instead understood as a rational response to the scale of ecological threats we face.

While eco-anxiety can affect anyone, young people report experiencing it at higher rates. A [major international study](#) of youth found that nearly 60% were very or extremely worried about climate change, and many said this distress shaped their daily lives, life goals, and future planning. In Canada, [about 75% of people believe](#) climate change is a global emergency, a statistic that both reflects awareness and helps explain rising levels of distress.

### How Eco-Anxiety Manifests

Eco-anxiety does not have a single profile. Instead, it shows up in multiple ways across emotional, physical, and behavioral domains.

- **Physical symptoms:** disrupted sleep, poor concentration, irritability, headaches, muscle tension, or panic attacks.
- **Emotional symptoms:** grief, sadness, helplessness, guilt, hypervigilance, or anger. For some, these emotions are constant; for others, they arrive in waves triggered by news, personal experiences, or conversations.
- **Behavioral responses:** withdrawing from climate-related discussions or avoiding news altogether. In contrast, some respond with hyper-engagement, throwing themselves into activism to manage their fears.

### Intergenerational Differences

Young people often describe eco-anxiety in terms of a changing and uncertain future. They may wonder whether higher education, careers, or having children make sense in a world marked by worsening climate impacts. Parents and caregivers, by contrast, may experience fear for their children’s futures or guilt about environmental damage passed down through generations.

### Eco-Grief

Eco-anxiety can also overlap with *eco-grief*—mourning the destruction of ecosystems, species, and cultural traditions already affected by climate change. For Indigenous communities, the loss of land, clean water, or traditional food systems represents both environmental devastation and cultural trauma, intensifying the emotional toll.

### A Useful Signal

Importantly, eco-anxiety is not inherently harmful. Like physical pain warning us of injury, eco-anxiety serves as a signal that something is wrong. The real challenge lies in responding to it in ways that transform distress into resilience and constructive action.

### Strategies for Responding to Eco-Anxiety

Because eco-anxiety is rooted in real and urgent concerns, the goal is not to eliminate it. Instead, effective responses emphasize agency, resilience, and collective engagement.

### For Individuals

- **Problem-focused coping:** Deepen understanding of climate issues and take practical steps—reducing waste, supporting sustainable transport, conserving energy, or

advocating for policy changes. While individual actions alone cannot solve climate change, they reinforce personal agency and reduce feelings of helplessness.

- **Meaning-focused coping:** Anchor oneself in values such as stewardship, justice, and responsibility. Seek out stories of environmental progress and communities working for change. Maintaining a sense of purpose sustains hope even when challenges feel overwhelming.
- **Personal wellbeing:** Balance engagement with rest. Spending time outdoors, engaging in creative expression, practicing mindfulness, or seeking professional counseling when needed are ways to manage stress and avoid burnout.

### For Families

- **Open dialogue:** Children and adolescents are already aware of climate change. Honest, age-appropriate conversations validate their concerns and reduce isolation. Parents do not need to offer complete solutions—listening and acknowledging are equally important.
- **Shared action:** Families can volunteer for environmental clean-ups, garden together, or adopt sustainable household practices. These shared efforts model constructive engagement and strengthen intergenerational connection.
- **Cultural resilience:** Storytelling—whether through oral traditions, literature, or cultural practices—can transmit narratives of endurance, environmental care, and responsibility to younger generations.

### For Communities

- **Collective action:** Joining local groups or movements transforms individual worry into shared purpose. Community engagement not only addresses environmental issues but also builds social bonds and mutual support.
- **Education:** Schools and universities play a crucial role. Climate-anxiety toolkits, like those developed by the University of British Columbia, provide structured ways to guide classroom and community discussions, turning fear into informed dialogue.
- **Support networks:** Community mental health organizations can normalize eco-anxiety and offer tailored services. In BC, the Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance (MHCCA) is a leading example, linking people to practitioners who understand climate-related distress.

### Building Resilience Through Connection

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt and recover during difficult times. Eco-anxiety can feel paralyzing, but when approached collectively, it can become a catalyst for strength.

- A teenager who joins a youth climate network may find comfort in realizing their fears are shared by peers, turning feelings of being alone into a sense of solidarity.
- A family who plants trees together after a wildfire can acknowledge what has been lost while also nurturing hope for regrowth.
- A community rallying around sustainable development projects may discover renewed purpose in shared problem-solving.

Resilience does not mean ignoring eco-anxiety or pretending it does not exist. Instead,

it involves acknowledging climate distress while cultivating the emotional and social resources to act despite it.

### **Eco-Anxiety and Climate Distress Course**

Provincial Psychosocial Services has developed a full course on eco-anxiety and climate distress if you would like to learn more. It is available as a certificate course through [PHSA Learning Hub](#) if you are a healthcare provider, student, or PHSA-affiliated volunteer.

Alternatively, if you are a member of the public or or volunteers with Emergency Support Services or other organization, we have a [public link](#). However, it will not generate a certificate automatically. You can request one by contacting us.

**We have also developed an [Eco-Anxiety poster](#) for printing.**

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### **Definitions**

**Psychosocial:** The term 'psychosocial' refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person and the social dimension of a person. The *psychological* dimension includes the internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions, and the *social* dimension includes relationships, family and community network, social values and cultural practices. 'Psychosocial support' refers to the actions that address both psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities. (Psychosocial interventions. A Handbook, page 25.)

*The title "MHPSS" in this bulletin refers to a broad approach to mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. It does not signify the endorsement or inclusion of specific services or organizations.*

### **Provincial Psychosocial Services**

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