

## UK doctors to treat people suffering from eco-anxiety

22nd July 2024



Eco-anxiety is a medical condition affecting an increasingly larger number of young people worldwide. Doctors in the UK have been advised to raise the topic of climate change during consultations with patients. New guidelines encourage doctors to discuss the dangers of global warming. A health consultation might now consist of a medical diagnosis, along with advice on how to reduce carbon footprints. It might also include help on how to deal with eco-anxiety. The Daily Mail newspaper cited critics of the guidelines who called them "seriously unethical". They said: "Doctors should spend their precious time treating patients rather than lecturing them on 'politicised issues'."

The United Nations has described eco-anxiety as "an emergency crisis hidden in plain sight". Eco-anxiety is defined as stress caused by the constant worry about the environment and the climate crisis. The UN said the condition will severely affect the mental health of children. Downtoearth.com wrote: "Extreme weather events like wildfires, heatwaves, droughts, storms, and floods lead to displacement and food shortages, causing psychological harm to humans. They lead to anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress." A UN survey found that 59 per cent of young people in a study were distressed about the climate. The youngsters felt, "sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty".

Sources: [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk) / [phys.org](https://www.phys.org) / [downtoearth.org.in](https://www.downtoearth.org.in)

### Writing

Eco-anxiety will become an unstoppable pandemic that we must stop now. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

eco-anxiety / medical / worldwide / climate change / medical diagnosis / patients / crisis / stress / environment / extreme weather / droughts / food shortages / anxious

### True / False

- 1) Eco-anxiety has started to affect the aged all over the world. T / F
- 2) UK doctors will advise patients on how to reduce their carbon footprint. T / F
- 3) Critics said it was unethical to ask doctors to talk about the climate. T / F
- 4) Critics said doctors should start lecturing people on politics. T / F
- 5) The UN said eco-anxiety was a hidden crisis in plain sight. T / F
- 6) The UN said eco-anxiety would severely affect young people. T / F
- 7) Website says extreme weather can cause post-traumatic stress. T / F
- 8) Many youngsters are starting to feel empowered. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>condition</b>     | a. catastrophe |
| 2. <b>raise</b>         | b. opinion     |
| 3. <b>consultations</b> | c. immoral     |
| 4. <b>diagnosis</b>     | d. ashamed     |
| 5. <b>unethical</b>     | e. bring up    |
| 6. <b>crisis</b>        | f. continual   |
| 7. <b>constant</b>      | g. anguished   |
| 8. <b>psychological</b> | h. illness     |
| 9. <b>distressed</b>    | i. mental      |
| 10. <b>guilty</b>       | j. meetings    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Why is eco-anxiety "an emergency crisis hidden in plain sight"?
- c) What might trigger someone with eco-anxiety?
- d) How can we help children with eco-anxiety?
- e) Does extreme weather make you worry more about the future?
- f) Does the climate crisis make you think about not having children?
- g) How can we help children who feel helpless?
- h) What would you like to ask a young person with eco-anxiety?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Eco-anxiety is a medical                  | a. carbon footprints     |
| 2. during consultations                      | b. shortages             |
| 3. advice on how to reduce                   | c. patients              |
| 4. critics of the guidelines who called them | d. about the climate     |
| 5. spend their precious time treating        | e. with patients         |
| 6. an emergency crisis hidden                | f. traumatic stress      |
| 7. floods lead to                            | g. condition             |
| 8. food                                      | h. in plain sight        |
| 9. post-                                     | i. "seriously unethical" |
| 10. distressed                               | j. displacement          |

## Discussion – Student B

- How bad is a condition like eco-anxiety?
- What do you think doctors know about eco-anxiety?
- How anxious are you about the environment?
- How does concern about the environment change how you live?
- Has the climate crisis affected what you want to do in the future?
- Is it unethical to ask doctors to advise patients about climate change?
- Should doctors be more political?
- What advice do you have for people with eco-anxiety?

## Spelling

- New giieluedsn
- A health iotounlnscat
- a medical isgiosnda
- called them seriously ciuhlntae
- spend their peucrois time treating patients
- lecturing them on doliieispct issues
- hortdgsu, storms, and floods
- causing locsoilgphcay harm to humans
- post-iaucmtrat stress
- idsresetds about the climate
- youngsters felt, "sad, uasinox ...
- helpless, and giluyt

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. j	4. b	5. c
6. a	7. f	8. i	9. g	10. d

## Role Play

### Role A – Heatwaves

You think heatwaves are the worst weather events. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their events aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): hurricanes, floods or blizzards.

### Role B – Hurricanes

You think hurricanes are the worst weather events. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their events aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): heatwaves, floods or blizzards.

### Role C – Floods

You think floods are the worst weather events. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their events aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): hurricanes, heatwaves or blizzards.

### Role D – Blizzards

You think blizzards are the worst weather events. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their events aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): hurricanes, floods or heatwaves.

## Speaking – Extreme weather

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| • wildfires | • blizzards  |
| • heatwaves | • hurricanes |
| • droughts  | • floods     |
| • storms    | • sandstorms |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	T	6	T	7	T	8	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.