

# Climate Stress Workshops

Final Report



Submitted to Sackville Hospital Foundation

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## Background and Introduction

During 2019-2020 EOS Eco-Energy was awarded funding from the Sackville Hospital Foundation to offer a series of workshops on managing climate change stress and eco-anxiety which aimed to help in the prevention of more serious and costly mental health interventions. The need for such workshops came about because EOS realized that climate change issues can be mentally taxing, but that we also can't give up hope, tune out or burn out. We need everyone engaged in order to address climate change and be truly resilient. People are worried about the dykes, floods, storms, power outages, and some are stressed from repair costs, burnout, what to tell their children, if their house has any value, if they should move, etc. Others feel a sense of trauma and sadness at the loss of spaces, species, and the familiar climate. Many feel isolated in their concerns and worries and do not have support from their family, spouse, friends. There are many social media sites where people can connect but that is not the same, or as helpful or meaningful as connecting in person. Research by Mount Allison University students for EOS found that local people are feeling stress, anxiety, fear, anger, fatigue, isolated, grief, guilt, helplessness, despair, sadness, etc. EOS partnered with IRIS Community Counselling and designed a workshop offering tips and strategies to reduce and manage climate stress. After a highly successful pilot in winter/spring 2019, the need for more workshops was very clear. Thus this past year together with IRIS Community Counselling, EOS hosted 7 workshops, including two specifically for youth.

This final report shares the project goals, method, results and impacts of the project. Through the workshop series, EOS learned that while climate stress is a serious concern affecting a growing number of people around the globe, it also brings people together, and great things can come out of climate stress when people learn coping strategies to manage it and turn their stress into action to better our communities.

## Project Goals

The goals of the project were to:

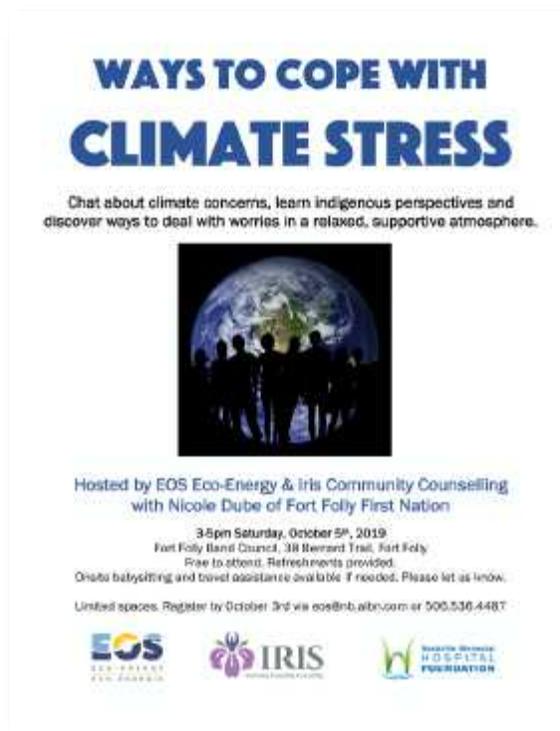
1. Increase the mental resiliency of the Tantramar community (adults and youth) related to climate change;
2. Provide coping tools and strategies related to climate change and mental health in order to reduce stress and anxiety and prevent larger interventions;
3. Provide a safe and supportive space for those suffering the mental impacts of climate change alone (ie. reduce feelings of isolation); and
4. Provide opportunity for community members to connect and help each other work toward community-based climate action(s).

In addition, our project addressed the following *Tantramar Area Community Needs Assessment* priority areas:

- 6.1 A decrease in mental resiliency and coping skills in children and youth in the Community.
- 6.2 The need for support staff in the community to help coordinate and implement prevention/health promotion type programming, particularly in outer rural communities

## Methodology

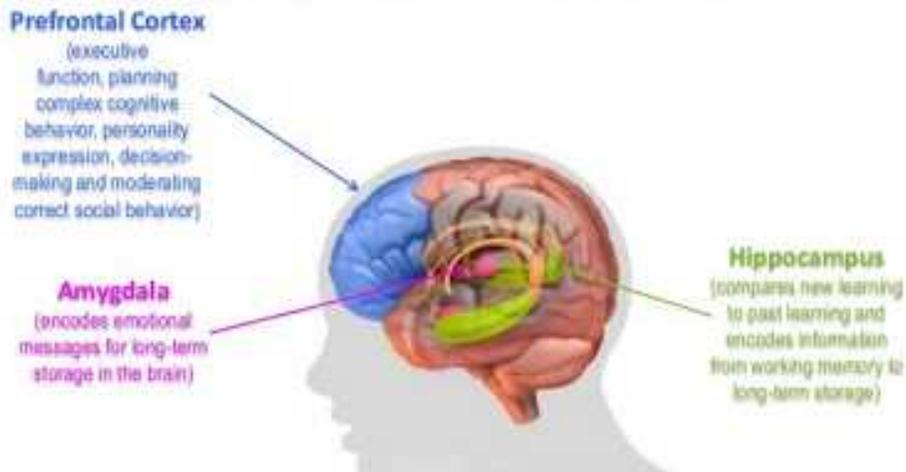
From June 2019 to February 2020, EOS promoted, organized and hosted 7 workshops, lasting 2-3 hours each. EOS partnered with local mental health therapists with IRIS Community Counselling who specialize in cognitive behavioral therapy techniques. They are Canadian Certified Counsellors with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. Two sessions were focused directly for youth, and the rest were open to the public, each with a special theme such as teaching and working with kids, working or volunteering in the environmental field, parenting through climate change, indigenous teachings, and one was just a general climate stress workshop. EOS engaged different resource people for some of the workshops such as Nicole Dube, indigenous leader with Fort Folly First Nation. All workshops were free to attend and EOS offered transportation assistance, refreshments and free childcare at the workshops to help decrease barriers. Workshops took place at a variety of locations in the Sackville region. The project went according to plan but because we received less funding than originally hoped for, we held 7 instead of 8 workshops.



Workshop poster. EOS, 2019

All the workshops followed a similar outline. IRIS and EOS staff introduced themselves and provided a bit of context, history and why we were offering the workshops. The Sackville Memorial Hospital Foundation was mentioned as the funder. We then we talked about self-care and asked people to introduced themselves and talk about what they had done for self-care that day and what they do for community care. There was time provided for participants to share their emotions, stories, concerns, fears, etc. IRIS explained how the brain works when we are stressed. The pre-frontal cortex is responsible for rational decision making. But when we get stressed the amygdala can take over and we can experience an emotional response. This is our brain telling us that what we are worried about it important. IRIS also showed how the brain works by showing a mindfulness jar filled with glitter which simulates how our brains can feel shaky and unstable but can also settle become calm when we use coping strategies.

## Learning how the brain works...



Source: <https://sites.google.com/a/msd.k12.wi.us/ms-eide-s-webpage/classroom-information/mindup>

The second half of the workshops focused on sharing a variety of coping strategies as well as ways to harness stress and turn it into something positive. For example, participants learned about the circle of control, the STOPP method, coping strategies, stress symptoms, how to use our stress hormones, climate actions they can take at home and in the community and beyond, ways to feel hopeful, how to take action, etc. A small selection of the resource handouts are shared in Appendix 1. EOS staff shared information on local impacts and the vast array of local projects and initiative to volunteer with or be a part of. As a result, many participants signed up to volunteer with EOS and have since participated in other EOS programs such as our draft-proofing work parties.

### Workshop #1: Youth

Our first workshop of the year was for youth. We offered it as a session during Mount Allison Summer Camps in late August. 40 students participated and ranged in age from 9 to 13. With so many participants, we shifted our approach a bit. We asked: What is the first word you think of when you think of climate change? Many students said they think of the weather, animals, destruction. Then, after explaining self-care, we asked: What do you do for self-care? Coping strategies mentioned included: reading, video games, TV, talking to a parent, etc. We had a talking stick and each student had a chance to answer and share. The brain and how it acts under stress was explained. Then students broke into smaller groups to discuss self-care options and also action they can do to help the environment. Then we all came together in the large group to share and add ideas to a large drawing of planet earth. Self-care ideas were written in blue in the oceans and environmental actions were written in green on the land masses. Some of the ideas shared included: riding bikes, using less energy, using solar energy, etc.



*Students work together to list self-care and environmental actions they can take. Photo: A Marlin*



*Filling in the earth with self-care and climate actions. Photo: A Marlin*

## **Workshop #2: Youth**

Our second workshop was open to all youth in Sackville and took place at the Sackville Public Library one August afternoon. Nine participants took place and ranged in ages from elementary to university. We asked: What is the first word you think of when you think of climate change? Then we asked what do you do for self-care? Things that were mentioned included reading, reading the Bible, using fidget spinners, video games, etc. The brain was explained using the mindfulness jar (see photo below). Since we were in the library EOS staff read a story called *The Magic School Bus and the Climate Change Challenge*. This was a good launching off point to then talk about what climate impacts we are seeing locally and climate actions that kids can take. Ideas were once again added to the large drawing of the planet earth.



Marie of IRIS explains how the brain works using a mindfulness jar. Photo: A Marlin

### Workshop # 3: Educating Youth

The workshop for teachers, other educators and anyone who works or volunteers with children and youth took place after school on September 17<sup>th</sup> at Marshview Middle School with nine people participating. Once again, the IRIS counsellors asked what are you doing do self-care? Answers included walking, running, yoga, etc. What do you do for community care? Answers included: volunteering, started a student environment club, etc. We also asked what brought you here today, what concerns you? There were many and varied answers:

- *Students feel helpless*
- *Comparison to being at school during nuclear crisis*
- *I don't want to be too scary but truthful and engaging*
- *I don't want students to feel scared all the time*
- *Students are stressed enough, some have many issues – wondering if their parents will be home at night, if they will have food to eat, etc.*
- *How not to add to their anxiety*
- *How to introduce climate change in a more sensitive way?*
- *I want to be able to give hope*
- *How to help depressive tendencies*
- *The education system is in crisis, there are many stressors and climate change is one of many*

IRIS and EOS staff members provided information on their backgrounds and the need for these workshops. IRIS provided lots of hand outs and went over how to use them in classrooms and other settings. One link was suggested called Resources for Rethinking [www.r4r.ca](http://www.r4r.ca) and has activities focused on sustainable development for every grade level.

EOS also provided information on our programs (including lesson plans on climate change adaptation and resiliency for k-12 classrooms) and ways for teachers, students and schools to get involved in climate actions locally.

At the end of the session teachers were asked for feedback. Some of the things they said included:

- *I liked the sharing.*
- *Loved the visuals, especially how the brain works and the mindfulness jar.*

- *Loved the handouts and classroom resources.*
- *Loved the coping strategies.*

#### **Workshop # 4: Indigenous Teachings for Managing Climate Stress**

A workshop for the general public was offered October 5<sup>th</sup> at the Fort Folly First Nation band office in partnership with IRIS and also Nicole Dube, the Fort Folly First Nation cultural coordinator. Fourteen people participated in the workshop including women and men, university students, parents, teachers, environmentalists, professionals, retirees, TV actor/writer, etc. No one needed free childcare or transportation to Fort Folly, but some people carpooled together.

Participants made tea and enjoyed cookies and gathered in a circle outside in the afternoon fall sun. A circle is meaningful as everyone in the circle is equal. The workshop began with offering Nicole a gift of tobacco, which she accepted. Nicole then shared a prayer and thanked everyone for coming. She then performed a smudge ceremony with sage, cedar and sweet grass which help to keep bad energy away and welcomes good energy. Everyone in the circle took turns washing the smoke over their bodies. IRIS and EOS staff also introduced themselves.

Participants were then asked what brought them to the workshop, what was concerning them and what they hoped to learn. Some of their comments included:

- *Feeling a sense of despair.*
- *Wanting to learn indigenous perspectives.*
- *Wanting to learn more about climate change.*
- *Being frank with feelings can be therapeutic.*
- *Aboriginal perspective is lacking in science, there is more than just the clinical side.*
- *It's hard to be perfect, having difficult personal challenges such as how to reduce waste in a plastic world. It's hard to be perfect.*
- *At the mention of the future and kids, I lose it.*
- *Feeling anger which leads to anxiety.*

Nicole began by explaining that mother earth provides water, food, shelter and medicines. This is the connection to the land. She explained there are four races of people on the planet (red, yellow, white and black) and each has a sacred gift. The red race signifies Turtle Island, or the indigenous peoples of North and South America and their gift is connection to and protectors of the land. It was explained that a prophecy has been part of their culture for a long time that says when the earth is in trouble, people will come to the "red race" for advice, knowledge, teachings. This seemed to sum up the reason and setting for the workshop. Another prophecy says that change will be led by a child. And thus, connections to Swedish youth climate activist Greta Thunberg and to indigenous youth leader Autumn Peltier were made, who both recently spoke to the UN during global climate talks.

Nicole shared her people's teachings including:

- Land stewardship, respect for the land, and only taking what you need.
- Everything has a spirit or soul.

- Love ourselves and others and all four races.
- Everyone in traditional Mi'kmaq communities had a role. The goal was to keep everyone safe. There was no need for police pre-contact.
- Elders are respected, not hidden away in nursing homes because they are seen as burden.
- Everyone lived in harmony together, sharing, and taking care of each other, but sharing is not a "western" way of life.

Some climate change impacts were also explained including a shift in the abundance of plants. Ash and cedar plants are not doing as well here and Mi'kmaq people must go further and further north to find them. There are seasonal shifts as well. In the Mi'kmaq calendar there are 13 moons (not 12 months) and each one explains what to do at that time of year such as the moose calling moon and the frog croaking moon. However, the seasons are shifting and things are not happening when they used to.

IRIS staff then explained how anxiety works and how the brain functions under stress. But there are a variety of self-care strategies to calm the brain so that you can make good decisions and take action. Guilt was also explained. If we do not have negative intent, we can't really feel guilty.

The discussion opened up to the group and some of the things that were said included:

- *There is the opportunity for "post-traumatic growth" after PTSD.*
- *There is a need to prepare for "breakdown" by learning skills, knowledge, medicinal plants, etc.*
- *And there is a need to do things, prepare, together. Participants acknowledged the need to go back to traditional First Nations communities.*
- *Cities may be worse off than rural communities with local resources and rural skills.*
- *Climate change is an opportunity to create an inspiring community.*
- *The magnitude of the problem was mentioned and how little impact one person can have. But others also said we must celebrate the smaller actions and do them together.*
- *It was said that we all have a responsibility because we all rely on each other for survival.*
- *We are recognizing our current system will fail and so this is a pivotal moment for what we can do about it and to have hope.*

The workshop ended with everyone invited to share what they will do (or are doing) for self-care and for community care. Some of the self-care strategies mentioned included: yoga, art, warm baths, taking the time to come to the workshop, food preparation, climate crisis preparations, etc. Community care included: voting, community preparations, working and volunteering for EOS, teaching students, thinking about better community design, being with people, volunteering at schools, etc. Finally, to end on a positive note everyone learned and sang the *Mi'kmaq Friendship Song* together.



*Everyone sings the Mi'kmaq Friendship Song to conclude the workshop. Photo: M Reinsborough-Wadden*

EOS provided information on its other services and activities and provided handouts on ways to take environmental and climate actions. IRIS also provided a variety of handouts on coping strategies for participants to take home.

At the end of the workshop thirteen participants filled in evaluation forms. All thirteen rated the workshop as a 4 or 5 out of 5. Seven participants said they knew more about ways to cope with climate stress and indigenous perspectives on climate change at the end of the workshop compared to at the beginning. Five reported an increase in knowledge level and one said they actually felt they knew less than when they arrived. Perhaps he or she came to realize they need to do more learning and we had opened their eyes to many issues. Eight participants said they were more likely to engage in ways to cope as a result of attending the workshop. People found the workshop very interesting. In particular some of the comments included:

- *It was very interesting to hear people's thoughts and concern about climate change and how people from different backgrounds find their unique way to have a positive impact on society.*
- *Meeting folks in the community.*
- *All the perspectives and talking to one another.*
- *I found the indigenous perspective the most interesting.*
- *Considering eco-stress as a specific type of stress is important.*
- *Sharing with others, recognizing how we are similar.*
- *The complex networks and ideas.*
- *Nice to see new people out that I haven't seen before.*

Participants were also asked how they plan to use what they learned at the workshop. Some of the comments included:

- *I will continue learning and educating myself and sharing with people around me.*
- *Continue to get involved and make connections.*
- *I will use the information to inform my voting decision.*
- *I will use it to cope with continued stress.*
- *In the classroom and at home.*
- *I plan to use it to soothe my own anxiety and climate stress along with sharing new ideas with friends and family.*

- *I will prioritize self-care.*
- *I plan to use it in my teaching at school.*
- *Draw more.*

Finally, EOS now asks participants on all workshop evaluation forms (not just those for the climate stress workshops) if they feel more or less at ease regarding their climate stress after participating. Some of the comments on evaluation forms for this workshop included:

- *I do feel more at ease after this event because I learned that I'm not the only one who feels this stress and despite all the bad news we can still be hopeful.*
- *I feel more at ease, however, I think more mindfulness and work on this stress will need to be continued long-term.*
- *Feeling involved and inspired.*
- *Feeling a sense of comradeship.*
- *I feel a little less [stressed].*
- *I feel better.*
- *At ease is not the word. I feel comfort in the fact that other people are aware and worried.*
- *The same.*
- *A little more stressed because [climate change] is a topic I had not given a lot of thought.*
- *More, knowing others feel that way.*

In summary, this workshop was more positive than most we've done on climate stress so far. Nicole enabled people to see a better community and a better future as a result of climate stress.

### **Workshop # 5: General Climate Stress**

The 5<sup>th</sup> workshop took place at and in partnership with Open Sky on November 14. Open Sky helped fund part of IRIS Counselling's time to allow us to do this workshop. Open Sky's mission is to support adult mental health in our community. The event was open to their participants and to the public. Seventeen people attended including Open Sky participants, their mentors, volunteers, staff as well as community folks and two high school students. It was a great mix of genders, ages, backgrounds, and abilities. The workshop began with supper provided and made by Open Sky participants. EOS staff presented on local climate impacts and local actions and projects. IRIS then asked what people do for community care and what we do for self-care. Some of the answers included reading, music, being with animals, being in nature, etc. We asked, what brought people here tonight: Some of the comments heard included:

- *I didn't think it was important to cope with stress, I just wanted to take action. But then I felt stressed and so I am happy I came tonight.*
- *I am older and feel guilt that I and my generation didn't do more. And because of this, I am not sure how to participate in the youth climate strikes.*

Resources handed out including the coping strategies challenges, circle of control, ACTIVATE strategies from the Australian Psychological Society (see Appendices 1 and 2), etc. IRIS counsellors explained that guilt is not warranted without negative intent. A common take away mentioned by participants was wanting to volunteer with EOS. Taking action is another important way to deal with stress. Since the workshop in November a

handful Open Sky clients and their mentors have volunteers for EOS at our draft-proofing work parties and have attended other EOS events.



*Amanda from EOS presents the workshop at Open Sky. Photo: Open Sky*



*IRS and EOS staff together at Open Sky. Photo: Open Sky*



*Discussion at Open Sky. Photo: Open Sky*

## **Workshop # 6: Environmental Work and Burn Out**

Our sixth workshop took place on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 6-8pm at Open Sky Farm. The venue is a relaxing, peaceful spot and Open Sky made healthy cookies and tea for our event. The general public was invited and the theme of the workshop was burnout, stress and anxiety from working on environment and climate change issues. Nine people participated (7 female and 2 male), all were adults. Some participants worked in the environmental or biology fields, some were volunteers or activists and some were just interested in climate change issues and mental health. The workshop followed the same format as earlier ones with a group discussion on self-care, community care, what brought people to the workshop, what is concerning them, how to maintain hope and tips and strategies to avoid burnout. There was a lot of discussion about whether to worry about small personal changes versus the large system changes that are needed but appear out of our control. We also talked about what gives us hope and how we keep going. We discussed how the brain functions under stress and what symptoms of stress can look and feel like. The IRIS counsellors also explained

when symptoms progress and may need professional intervention. Resources were shared such as various strategies for selfcare (see Appendix 1 for a small selection of the handouts). At the end of the workshop, participants filled in evaluation forms anonymously. Everyone gave us 4 or 5 out of 5 overall. Participants liked the exchange, learning other perspectives, hearing that they are not alone and others feel the same way. Everyone said they will use the strategies at home to help them cope. Some felt more at ease, some less at ease but also less alone or validated in their concerns/worries. Some suggestions for future events included: a cross generational climate stress workshop and sessions for businesses.

## **Workshops # 7: Raising Kids Through Climate Change**

The final workshop of the year took place the evening of February 4<sup>th</sup> at Tantramar Regional High School during Tantramar Climate Change Week. It was open to the general public and focused on raising children during climate change. Eight people (5 female, 3 male) attended and included parents, non-parents, and those who work or volunteer with kids of all ages. Childcare and transportation assistance was once again offered and we had one child attend and take part in our kids activities. They read stories focused on fun, positive environmental themes, did activity sheets and crafts with childcare. The workshop followed the same format as earlier workshops with discussions in a circle on self-care, community care, concerns and worries, how the brain functions, and coping strategies. Some of the comments made during the workshop about why people chose to attend included:

- *I want to know what parents of older children than mine are dealing with so I can prepare.*
- *I don't want to lie to my children, but I don't want to scare them.*
- *Kids are asking question like how adults can continue to hurt the planet and where to put their efforts into local and tangible actions or larger systematic change.*
- *How can we say that their actions will even make a difference though?*
- *How do we help our kids who deal with being not "cool" at school because climate change action isn't push at school?*
- *How do we let them know that social injustice can be okay and we'll have their backs?*
- *How to turn a doom and gloom message into a positive message?*
- *Also how to get youth's attention in today's extreme social media world?*
- *Some kids are no longer able to participate in the climate strikes because it is too much for them to be angry all the time.*
- *We need to learn grief counselling as parents as there have been sleepless nights, tears, etc.*
- *Worried I can't keep my kids safe anymore.*

Some strategies were shared including learning what we can and can't control, and how to shelf things at times so we don't marinate in them constantly. The counsellors also shared when stress and anxiety can become too much and may need professional advice, such as when they impede your normal routines, cause us to withdraw from social situations, sleeplessness, etc. There were also questions from participants about how to differentiate between normal teen anxieties and climate anxiety. It was suggested to talk about it and help your children tease out what is impacting them. Helpful "aps" for dealing with stress were also suggested by the counsellors and participants including *Simple Habit* and *Mindshift*. It was also said that young and old alike are all in climate change together. Adults need to empower youth with more resiliency skills too as we work toward system change. One participant said we all need "thrival" skills – to survive and thrive. Another participant said that the most important thing children can do is to spend time in and appreciate nature. Kids need to reconnect with nature and combat nature-deficit disorder. Indeed, one the

key strategies for dealing with climate stress is to spend time in nature (see suggestions for further reading in Appendix 2).

The workshop ended on a positive note with discussions around the need for gentle forgiveness for all and that none of us have been through this before, adults or youth. Parents are processing things at the same time as their children. EOS staff mentioned the positivity of more and more people and governments waking up to climate change. Participants agreed with so many other stress workshop participants this past year that it is nice not feel alone anymore. The stress of climate change is normalized by coming together. One participant said that it is also good to know that you can move on from stress and anxiety. You can take the stress and do something positive with it.

At the end of the workshop EOS explained ways for participants and their families to volunteer locally in the climate change movement, as well as the rest of the events that were on schedule for Tantramar Climate Change Week. Participants were also invited to voluntarily fill out an evaluation form. Four participants were able to stay a bit longer and filled in forms. All four rated the workshops a 5/5. All four also said they learned more about climate stress and were now more likely to engage in coping strategies. People found the sharing of stories, insights from participants and the coping strategies most interesting. Participants planned to use the handouts, speak to their children and/or share with family and friends. And all participants felt more supported in their or their child's climate stress. Finally, participants would like more climate stress workshops for families.



Resource table at stress workshop. Photo: A. Marlin



Participants at parenting workshop. Photo: A. Marlin

## Summary of Results

The project was successful and had the following results:

- We held 7 workshops (one less than planned due to less funding obtained)
- 106 people attended, with only about 5 people were repeat participants attending two workshops, the rest each attended one workshop. (Many more than was expected!)
- Evaluations received were all extremely positively and point to the need for such workshops to continue
- This is final report and has been submitted to the Sackville Memorial Hospital Foundation

## Impacts and Community Benefits

Workshop participants learned how to cope with climate stress and how to focus on self-care strategies. They learned cognitive behavioural strategies as well as how the brain functions on stress, how to harness stress for proactive, positive impacts and participants also connect with others with similar feelings, concerns and experiences. People felt less isolated, more supported and now have the tools to be mentally resilient as we continue to deal with more and more climate change impacts. Some participants felt a renewed sense of hope and all felt the ability to take positive actions toward their own mental health, self-care and environmental action. The sessions helped provide preventative strategies and advice before mental health concerns get out of hand and require larger and more costly interventions including medications.

The project has benefited the community at large. Sessions were open to everyone to participate. Participants are able to better function in their daily lives including at home and at work or school and this will have a beneficial impact on those around them, their productivity and their involvement in their community. Participants have also made new connections and increased their support networks.

EOS Eco-Energy is grateful to the Sackville Hospital Foundation for supporting this project and we hope to be able to continue to offer these much-needed climate stress workshops in the future.



*Spending time in nature is a key strategy to cope with climate stress. Photo: Pixabay.com*

## Symptoms of Stress

Stress is one way that our bodies respond to the demands of our lives. A little bit of stress can be healthy—it keeps us alert and productive. However, all too often, we experience too much stress. Too much stress can result in serious *physical, emotional, and behavioral* symptoms.

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fatigue</li> <li>✓ Sleep difficulties</li> <li>✓ Stomachache</li> <li>✓ Chest pain</li> <li>✓ Muscle pain and tension</li> <li>✓ Headaches and migraines</li> <li>✓ Indigestion</li> <li>✓ Nausea</li> <li>✓ Increased sweating</li> <li>✓ Weakened immune system</li> <li>✓ Neck and back pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Loss of motivation</li> <li>✓ Increased irritability and anger</li> <li>✓ Anxiety</li> <li>✓ Depression or sadness</li> <li>✓ Restlessness</li> <li>✓ Inability to focus</li> <li>✓ Mood instability</li> <li>✓ Decreased sex drive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Unhealthy eating (over or under eating)</li> <li>✓ Drug or alcohol use</li> <li>✓ Social Withdrawal</li> <li>✓ Nail biting</li> <li>✓ Constant thoughts about stressors</li> </ul>

**Preview**

# COPING TOOLS: What Helps Me

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read A Book or Magazine             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ride a Bike or Skateboard            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hug or Climb a Tree                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Create Origami                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journal or Write a Letter           | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook or Bake                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Kind & Compassionate Self-Talk  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for Help                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a Collage or Scrapbook         | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to Someone You Trust            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rest, Nap or Take a Break           | <input type="checkbox"/> Weave, Knit or Crochet               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go on a Hike, Walk or Run           | <input type="checkbox"/> Build Something                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take Good Care of the Earth         | <input type="checkbox"/> Get a Hug                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink Water                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Visualize a Peaceful Place           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play a Board Game                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stretch                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do Something Kind                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Make Art                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make and Play with Slime           | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Positive Affirmations           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discover Treasures in Nature      | <input type="checkbox"/> Take Slow, Mindful Breaths         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a Shower or Bath             | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean, Declutter or Organize       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Aromatherapy                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink a Warm Cup of Tea           | <input type="checkbox"/> Cry                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgive, Let Go, Move On          | <input type="checkbox"/> Try or Learn Something New         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Yoga                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to Music                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden or Do Yardwork             | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a Stress Ball or Other Fidget  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jump on a Trampoline              | <input type="checkbox"/> Get Plenty of Sleep                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuddle or Play with Your Pet      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kick, Bounce or Throw a Ball       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Gratitude                | <input type="checkbox"/> Take or Look at Photographs        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do a Puzzle                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Healthy                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blow Bubbles                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Play Outside                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smile and Laugh                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sing and/or Dance                  |

# 50 Ways to Take a Break

**Take a Bath** (Bath tub)

**Listen to Music** (Musical notes)

**Take a Nap** (Hammock)

**Go to a body of water** (Lake)

**Watch the clouds** (Clouds)

**Light a candle** (Candle)

**REST your legs up on a wall** (Person resting legs)

**Let out a sigh** (Person sighing)

**Fly a Kite** (Person flying kite)

**Watch the stars** (Stars)

**Write a Letter** (Person writing)

**Learn Something NEW** (Lightbulb)

**Listen to a guided relaxation** (Person listening)

**Read a Book** (Open book)

**sit in NATURE** (Person sitting under a tree)

**2x Move twice as slowly** (Person moving slowly)

**Take Deep Belly Breaths** (Person breathing)

**MEDITATE** (Person meditating)

**Call a Friend** (Person on phone)

**Meander around Town** (Person walking)

**WRITE in a journal** (Person writing in a journal)

**Notice your Body** (Person standing)

**Buy some Flowers** (Person with flowers)

**Find a relaxing scent** (Person smelling a flower)

**Walk Outside** (Person walking)

**Go for a run** (Person running)

**Take a bike ride** (Person on a bicycle)

**Create your own coffee break** (Person with coffee)

**View some ART** (Person viewing art)

**Shhh! Eat a meal in SILENCE** (Person eating)

**Turn off all electronics** (Person turning off a device)

**Go to a Park** (Person in a park)

**Pet a furry creature** (Person petting a dog)

**Examine an everyday object with Fresh Eyes** (Person examining an object)

**Drive somewhere NEW** (Person driving a car)

**Go to a Farmer's Market** (Person at a market)

**Forgive Someone** (Person with a heart)

**read or watch something FUNNY** (Person reading/watching)

**COLOR with Crayons** (Person coloring)

**Make some MUSIC** (Person playing music)

**Climb a Tree** (Person climbing a tree)

**Let go of something** (Person letting go of balloons)

**Engage in small acts of KINDNESS** (Person with a heart)

**Do some gentle stretches** (Person stretching)

**Paint on a surface other than paper** (Person painting)

**Write a quick poem** (Person writing a poem)

**Read poetry** (Person reading poetry)

**Put on some music and DANCE** (Person dancing)

**Give Thanks** (Person with a heart)

# Coping Skills

## Anxiety

### Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it's also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.



### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed below, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain. Hold the tension for 10 seconds, and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

- Feet** Curl your toes tightly into your feet, then release them.
- Calves** Point or flex your feet, then let them relax.
- Thighs** Squeeze your thighs together tightly, then let them relax.
- Torso** Suck in your abdomen, then release the tension and let it fall.
- Back** Squeeze your shoulder blades together, then release them.
- Shoulders** Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop.
- Arms** Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop.
- Hands** Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers.
- Face** Scrunch your facial features to the center of your face, then relax.

Preview  
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# Circle of Control

What I can't control

What I can control

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## Appendix 2 – Suggested Further Resources and Reading for Dealing with Climate Stress

*ACTIVATE: 8 Strategies from Psychology to Tackle Climate Change, Australian Psychological Society, 2016*  
The EOS climate stress workshops have been following and promoting the strategies featured in this proven Australian model which include: acknowledging feelings, talking about it, valuing it, taking action, the time this is now, and engaging with nature.

[https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/b2304d9c-64d4-40a6-b063-3014128ec740/ACTIVATE-climate-change.pdf?utm\\_medium=PromoTile&utm\\_source=website](https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/b2304d9c-64d4-40a6-b063-3014128ec740/ACTIVATE-climate-change.pdf?utm_medium=PromoTile&utm_source=website)

*How to Help Climate Change, The New York Times, 2020*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/opinion/sunday/how-to-help-climate-change.html>

The need to change systems is a daunting task but the author urges us to focus on certain parts, the parts we are good at. And to stop focusing on ourselves, and demand larger changes. Her also says there is no threshold for which it is too late, it's always worth fighting for. Lots of good thoughts that may help keep people hopeful and motivated.

*How Scientists are Coping with Environmental Grief, The Guardian, 2020*

[https://amp.theguardian.com/science/2020/jan/12/how-scientists-are-coping-with-environmental-grief?fbclid=IwAR0s\\_sxfJHcoxW11bzDHB0JbhNhlStDGbjM2zxeMzieznFibQYyBfLe3IIU](https://amp.theguardian.com/science/2020/jan/12/how-scientists-are-coping-with-environmental-grief?fbclid=IwAR0s_sxfJHcoxW11bzDHB0JbhNhlStDGbjM2zxeMzieznFibQYyBfLe3IIU)

This article talks about how isolating climate stress can be for scientists and how important it is to come together and share pain, emotions, etc. And it talks about impressive leadership on the topic from indigenous leaders.

*The Emotional Toll of Climate Change on Science Professionals, Earth and Space Science News, 2019*

<https://eos.org/features/the-emotional-toll-of-climate-change-on-science-professionals>

This article talks about how scientists are supposed to be unemotional when it comes to their data and there remains a stigma around mental health in the sciences.