Hera
Helping Empower Women through Reskilling and Advancement

Eco-Anxiety: Understanding, Managing, and Taking Action



Activity: Sticky Note Reflection

What specific environmental issues trigger your anxiety? (Examples: deforestation, plastic pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, etc.)





How do these issues make you feel? (Examples: anxious, hopeless, frustrated, overwhelmed, motivated to take action, etc.)



What is Eco-Anxiety?

'Distress about climate change and its impacts on the landscape and human existence.'

Symptoms:

- anxiety (racing heart, shortness of breath etc.)
- grief, saddness
- intrusive thoughts about future disasters
- stress and fear
- sleep disturbances (insomnia, nightmares)
- nervousness, hopelessness
- behavioral component (affects relationships and daily functioning)





Causes

- proliferation of extreme weather phenomenon
- accumulation of rubbish in the oceans
- loss of biodiversity
- overexploitation of natural resources
- deforestation
- raising sea levels etc.



Mapping Eco-Anxiety & Taking Action

- Form small groups (4–5 people) and combine your sticky notes.

- Create a “Map of Eco-Anxiety“

Categorize your triggers into themes:

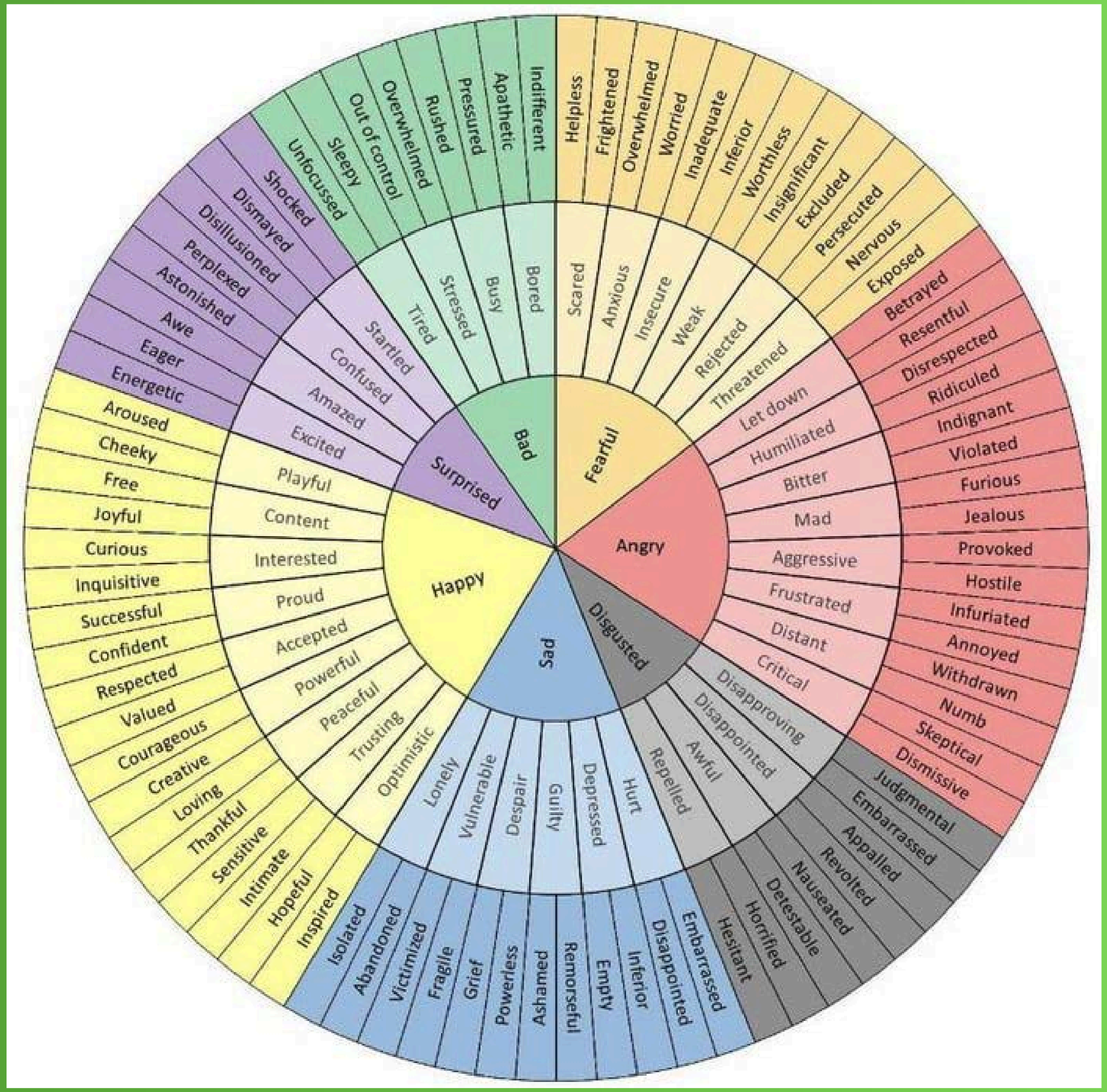
- Global issues (e.g., climate change, deforestation)
- Local issues (e.g., pollution in your city, water scarcity)
- Personal responsibility (e.g., consumption habits, waste reduction)

Note emotions, thoughts, and behaviors associated with these triggers.

- Select one major environmental trigger from your map.

- Brainstorm concrete actions:
  - Short-term actions (immediate, within your control)
  - Long-term actions (community organizing, policy advocacy etc.)

Emotion Map


Bad
Fearful
Angry
Disgusted
Sad
Happy
Surprised
Bored
Busy
Stressed
Tired
Scared
Anxious
Insecure
Weak
Rejected
Threatened
Let down
Humiliated
Bitter
Mad
Aggressive
Frustrated
Distant
Critical
Disapproving
Disappointed
Awful
Repelled
Hurt
Depressed
Guilty
Despair
Vulnerable
Lonely
Optimistic
Trusting
Peaceful
Powerful
Accepted
Proud
Interested
Content
Playful
Excited
Amazed
Confused
Startled
Indifferent
Apathetic
Pressured
Rushed
Overwhelmed
Out of control
Sleepy
Unfocussed
Shocked
Dismayed
Disillusioned
Perplexed
Astonished
Awe
Eager
Energetic
Aroused
Cheeky
Free
Joyful
Curious
Inquisitive
Successful
Confident
Respected
Valued
Courageous
Creative
Loving
Thankful
Sensitive
Intimate
Hopeful
Inspired
Isolated
Abandoned
Victimized
Fragile
Grief
Powerless
Ashamed
Remorseful
Empty
Inferior
Disappointed
Embarrassed
Hesitant
Horrified
Detestable
Nauseated
Revolted
Appalled
Embarrassed
Judgmental
Dismissive
Skeptical
Numb
Withdrawn
Annoyed
Infuriated
Hostile
Provoked
Jealous
Furious
Violated
Indignant
Ridiculed
Disrespected
Resentful
Betrayed
Exposed
Nervous
Persecuted
Excluded
Insignificant
Worthless
Inferior
Inadequate
Worried
Overwhelmed
Frightened
Helpless

Discussion



Coping Strategies for Eco-Anxiety: Turning Concern into Action

🌱 Community Building: Strength in Collective Action

❤️ Why It Helps: Eco-anxiety often worsens in isolation. Being part of a community fosters hope, shared responsibility, and action.

- Ways to Engage:
  - Join Local or Global Environmental Groups.
  - Attend Workshops & Events to connect with like-minded individuals and learn practical solutions.
  - Facilitate peer education.
  - Create Support Circles to openly discuss climate concerns, share coping strategies, and empower each other.
  - Engage in Local Projects.



Coping Strategies for Eco-Anxiety: Turning Concern into Action

🔹 Action-Oriented Approaches: Transform Anxiety into Impact
💪 Why It Helps: Taking action gives a sense of purpose, reducing feelings of helplessness and channeling eco-anxiety into meaningful change.



- Immediate & Individual Actions
  - Lifestyle changes, sustainable habits, education, and advocacy for a greener future
- Long-Term & Systemic Actions:
  - Policy advocacy, ethical consumerism, and systemic change for sustainability.

Coping Strategies for Eco-Anxiety: Turning Concern into Action

Mindfulness & Grounding Techniques

Why it helps: Eco-anxiety can trigger stress, fear, and feelings of helplessness. Mindfulness practices help regulate emotions and bring a sense of control.

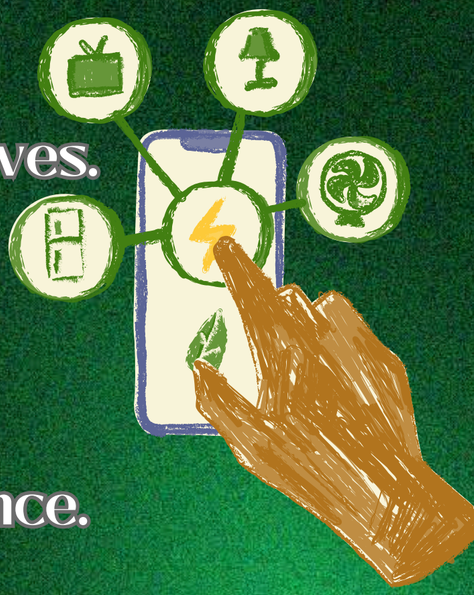


- Practical Strategies:
  - Meditation & Deep Breathing: Helps reduce anxiety by calming the nervous system.
  - Share worries and fears with trusted friends/therapist/support group
  - Nature Therapy: Spend time in green spaces to reconnect with the Earth and reduce stress.
  - Journaling & Gratitude Practices
  - Digital Detox



Eco-Anxiety Relief: Apps to Support Mindfulness, Sustainability, and Action

- Good On You – ethical fashion choices (rating brands on sustainability).
- Oroeco – tracks your carbon footprint and provides tips to lower your impact.
- AWorld – encourages sustainable habits with daily challenges and carbon tracking.
- Think Dirty – scans beauty and household products for eco-friendly alternatives.
- Earth Hero – Provides personalized climate actions and connects you with global initiatives.
- Go Climate – Tracks your carbon footprint and supports verified climate projects.
- Count Us In – Suggests impactful, collective climate actions to make a difference.
- ForkRanger – Eco-friendly recipes.
- Balance, WakingUp, Calm, Headspace- mindfulness, breathing exercises and other practices related to eco-emotions.



Supporting a Friend Through Eco-Anxiety

Validate their concearns

Support each other in making sustainable lifestyle changes, especially those you can see and share

Encourage them to channel their energy into advocacy groups where they can contribute meaningfully

Learn together about actionable steps you can take to reduce your environmental impact

Reconnect with nature by spending time outdoors and engaging in activities like planting trees, flowers, or other eco-friendly initiatives

Takeaway

- Eco-anxiety doesn't have to be paralyzing–it can be a driving force for transformation.
- Eco-anxiety is a normal, valid response to the environmental crisis and action, community, and self-care are key to managing it.



THANK YOU SO MUCH

for your participation