



**FORCE^{OF}
NATURE**
DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

A partnership with

**SEAT
AT
THE TABLE**
LET'S TALK ABOUT **CLIMATE ANXIETY**

In collaboration with

earthrise

STUDIO SILVERBACK

 **YouTube Originals**



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FORCE OF NATURE'S DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

**A Partnership with Seat at the Table:
Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety**

INTRODUCTION

The climate and ecological crisis is the greatest threat facing our planet today. As an educator, you have a unique opportunity to equip young people with the tools to take action. You also have a unique responsibility to safeguard their mental health and wellbeing: a growing concern in light of the rise of climate anxiety.

This 4-module lesson plan has been designed by a group of young people trained in talking about climate anxiety. The aim of it is to help you facilitate conversations about the climate crisis while safeguarding young people, navigating strong feelings, and fostering emotional resilience.

WELCOME TO THE DISCUSSION GUIDE



+ Before starting the Discussion Guide:

As a parent, guardian, teacher or community leader, before you start this lesson plan, we suggest that you watch Episodes 1 and 2 of *Seat at the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety*, so that you know what the students, children, or young people you are guiding will be seeing.

- We also suggest that you independently review the Introduction and Overview of this discussion guide.

+ How to use the Discussion Guide:

There are four modules in this series. Each module has a supplementary video, a suggested plan for classroom content, and supporting facilitator footnotes or definitions that will be helpful in running this module with students, children, or young people.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Structure

PREPARATION:

- **Independently watch:**

Episodes 1 and 2 of *Seat at the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety*
- Estimated time: 50 minutes

- **Independently review:**

Introduction page and Discussion Guide Structure
- Estimated time: 15 minutes

DAY 1 of Classroom content (film screening):

- Show participants **Episode 1: What Is Climate Anxiety? | Seat At The Table**
- Estimated time: 25 minutes

Alternatively, students, children and young people may **watch this independently** or with a parent/guardian.

DAY 2 of Classroom content (activity-based):

- **Independently review** Module 1 content and lesson suggestions
- Estimated time: 20 minutes

- **With participants**, run through Module 1 activities
- Estimated time: 45 minutes

DAY 3 of Classroom content (activity-based):

- **Independently review** Module 2 content and lesson suggestions
- Estimated time: 20 minutes

- **With participants**, run through Module 2 activities
- Estimated time: 45 minutes

DAY 4 of Classroom content (film screening):

- Show participants **Episode 2: Grieving for Earth: How to Cope with Climate Anxiety | Seat At The Table**
- Estimated time: 25 minutes

Alternatively, students, children and young people may **watch this independently** or with a parent/guardian

Day 5 of Classroom content (activity-based):

- **Independently review** Module 3 content and lesson suggestions
- Estimated time: 20 minutes

- **With participants**, run through Module 3 activities
- Estimated time: 45 minutes

Day 6 of Classroom content activity-based):

- **Independently review** Module 4 content and lesson suggestions
- Estimated time: 20 minutes

- **With participants**, run through Module 4 activities
- Estimated time: 45 minutes





FAQs

Who is this for and who should use it?

- This is a discussion guide designed to help educators, parents, guardians and community leaders support children and young people navigate climate-related emotions.

What is the age range for the activities in this workbook?

- The activities in this book have been designed for children and young people aged 12-24 - but of course, climate anxiety can affect people of all ages.

How should I use this discussion guide?

- We suggest that you first watch parts 1 and 2 of *Seat at the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety*. After this, you may choose to follow the suggested plan outlined on Page 5, which encourages you to show students Episodes 1 and 2 of *Seat at the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety* interspersed with our suggested classroom reflection activities. Alternatively, students may watch the episodes independently under the supervision of a parent or guardian. Set aside 45-60 minutes to facilitate each module, depending on the size of your group. Given that there is a lot of content for participants to digest, we suggest that you do 1 module per day, and follow the intended order.

Should I be aware of sensitive content?

- This discussion guide covers sensitive themes and interviews that some people might find distressing. We have included trigger warnings where appropriate, and trust you — the facilitator — to review the content ahead of time and determine if there are any elements you deem inappropriate or requiring greater sensitivity.

What group size is best for this discussion guide?

- We suggest a minimum of 6 participants, to encourage conversation and a maximum of 30 participants. If you have more participants, we suggest breaking into smaller groups for reflection activities to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to share if they wish.

+ A note on mental health:

- On the next page, we have included a list of UK-specific mental health resources. This is by no means a comprehensive list, and does not replace a safeguarding plan, but it can provide a good place to start. Should you have any additions, including from a different country or region, please submit these via the contact form on: www.forceofnature.xyz



SUPPORT RESOURCES

● Taking care of yourself

As an educator, alongside your teaching responsibilities, you also have a unique responsibility to safeguard the mental health and well-being of students. In order to do this, you must be able to identify and regulate your own emotions. While we will continually encourage you to model vulnerability to children and young people, we also encourage you to take the time to understand and modulate your own climate-related emotions.

● Supporting others

Below is a list of some places, organisations and resources that you may wish to contact if the activities in this discussion guide bring up any distressing thoughts, emotions or mental health impacts that you'd like further support with - both in yourself and in the children and young people you seek to support.

MIND

Provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Visit www.mind.org.uk/

Papyrus UK

Phone line for confidential advice for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or is concerned about someone else.

Call **0800 068 4141** or visit www.papyrus-uk.org

CALM

Phone and online webchat for men experiencing emotional stress.

Call **0800 58 58 58** or visit www.thecalmzone.net

Beat

Phone line supporting anyone affected by eating disorders.

Call **0345 634 1414** or visit www.b-eat.co.uk

NHS11

Phone line to discuss any new symptoms you are experiencing.

Call **111** or visit www.111.nhs.uk

Climate Psychology Alliance

Offers free therapeutic support for those experiencing distress in the face of the climate crisis.

Visit www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/therapy/388-findsupport

You may also like to chat with your GP who can help direct you to other appropriate services for you.

Please note that Force of Nature and its partners (including YouTube Originals) do not directly endorse any particular counselling service. These resources are also not a replacement for any form of mental health treatment.



MODULE 1

What is Climate Anxiety?

- **The Purpose of this Discussion:** Introduce the concept of climate-related emotions, allow participants to see how other children and young people feel, and lay the template for emotional and psychological resilience when learning about climate-related information.
- **The Big Question:** What is climate anxiety?



WHAT IS CLIMATE ANXIETY?

The Big Question



- Climate Anxiety Around the World | Seat At The Table

+ Description:

In this brief video, you will be hearing from young people around the world about how the climate crisis makes them feel. This is not often a question that we ask ourselves, or one another; but identifying the impact that the climate crisis has on our own mental health is the first step to understanding our emotions, coping with them, and channeling them into action.

+ The video is split into three sections

- **1) I FEEL** - you will hear from young people about the complicated, uncomfortable and often overwhelming emotions that they experience when they think about the climate crisis.
- **2) I FEAR** - young people share their fears, concerns and uncertainties about the future - all of which contribute to their own emotional experience of the climate crisis.
- **3. I HOPE** - these young people share how they are identifying hope amongst their own difficult climate emotions.

CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

1 ESTABLISH A SAFE SPACE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS, AND SET THE CONTEXT

Before you invite young people into a space where they will be sharing their own emotions and hearing from their peers, make sure you let them know you're establishing a safe environment in which they can be vulnerable and share freely.

- Invite the participants to sit in a circle around the screen, or gather at small tables.
- Make sure the room is well-lit, and you can be clearly seen and heard by all participants.
- Invite the participants to take a moment to close their eyes and breathe deeply before starting the conversation.

2 SHOW PARTICIPANTS THE EDUCATION FILM

Let the participants know that they are going to be hearing from other young people around the world about how the climate crisis makes them feel, and afterwards they will be doing a brief reflection activity.

- **In your introduction to the class, we suggest you say:**

The climate crisis is something that affects us all. Many of you probably hear about it on the news, through social media, or from your peers; maybe some of you discuss it at home. Today, we're going to talk about how this information makes us feel, and the impact that it may have on our mental health.

3 LEAD A REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- After showing the video, here is how we suggest leading the reflection.

Start by asking young people:

How does the climate crisis makes you feel?

After this question, go around the room and let participants share their responses. Encourage them to use a word or phrase to describe how they feel when they think about the climate crisis.

3.1 Why this activity?

We become less attached to or overwhelmed by our emotions when we put them into words.

Young people we've worked with often speak to the about feelings of alienation and loneliness coping with fear, uncertainty and grief; yet when we share these feelings among peers, it can remove some of the shame, guilt or stigma, and help us find solidarity.



CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

- After the participants have all had the opportunity to answer, follow up with this question:

Why do you think you feel this way?

Once again, go around the room and invite participants to reflect on where they think their feelings come from.

Encourage them to draw on examples from their own experience, perhaps from a situation that sparked a strong emotional response (e.g. seeing a video about the climate crisis; having a conversation with a friend; attending a climate protest; etc.)

- If you want to ease your participants into the exercise or find it difficult to prompt responses, you can try:

- **Sharing your own feelings or experiences** — displaying vulnerability can give license to young people to share how they are feeling.
- **Asking the participants** if, by a show of hands, they identified with any of the feelings expressed in the video.

How does the Climate crisis make you feel?

Why do you think you feel this way?

3.2 Why this activity?

A great way to focus the conversation about our climate emotions is to connect to our **why** we feel grief, **why** we want to take action, **why** we hold certain beliefs and values. This is important in the context of the climate crisis, where we can't deny or solve the source of our stress, only try to make sense of it.

For many difficult emotions like grief, fear, disappointment and guilt, we experience them because we feel that things that are dear to us - love, hope, connection, community - are under threat. Identifying "why" we feel the way we do can be a good way to rationalise our climate emotions, and understand that they are a normal and healthy response.



CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

4 PERFORM A CHECK-OUT

- Given the difficult feelings that may arise in this conversation, we encourage you to lead a check-out that ends on a hopeful note. Before closing this module, we encourage you to pose the following question to students:

What makes you feel hopeful for the future?

Offline material: After discussing this prompt, you could encourage participants to **work with a partner** to identify a person, organisation or group that gives them hope, to share before the next session.

+ Facilitator footnote:

When exploring nuanced topics such as climate anxiety and climate-related emotions, *how* we talk to one another is almost as important as *what* we talk about.

For many young people, this may be the first time that they've been invited to share how they feel about the climate crisis. Remember to demonstrate active listening in order to facilitate productive, compassionate and fulfilling dialogue for your participants.

Examples of active listening can include:

- Asking open-ended questions (i.e. that don't elicit "yes or no" responses)
- Requesting clarification or expansion ("Could you elaborate more on...")
- Being attentive
- Summarising ("What I think I hear you saying is...")
- Paraphrasing
- Reflecting feelings expressed back to the speaker
- Being attuned to feelings



MODULE 1

Further reading



+ Definition Box:

Identifying our feelings is a critical first step in deepening our emotional intelligence. However, when we feel strong emotions but don't know what to do with them, it's easy to feel shut down by them.

Differentiating between "climate anxiety" and "ecophobia" shows us that experiencing strong feelings with no sense of agency can lead to powerlessness, apathy and helplessness.

Climate Anxiety (also termed "eco-anxiety"): Feelings of stress, overwhelm, fear and grief toward the climate and ecological crisis. Also to be thought of as the "internal alarm bells" that tell us something is wrong, and hold the power to catalyse us towards climate action.

Ecophobia: When we have strong feelings but no way to express them or move through them, we may exhibit "eco-phobia".



In Episode 1: *What Is Climate Anxiety? | Seat At The Table*, you may remember that Jack sits down with Clover, a young climate activist from Australia and the founder of Force of Nature.

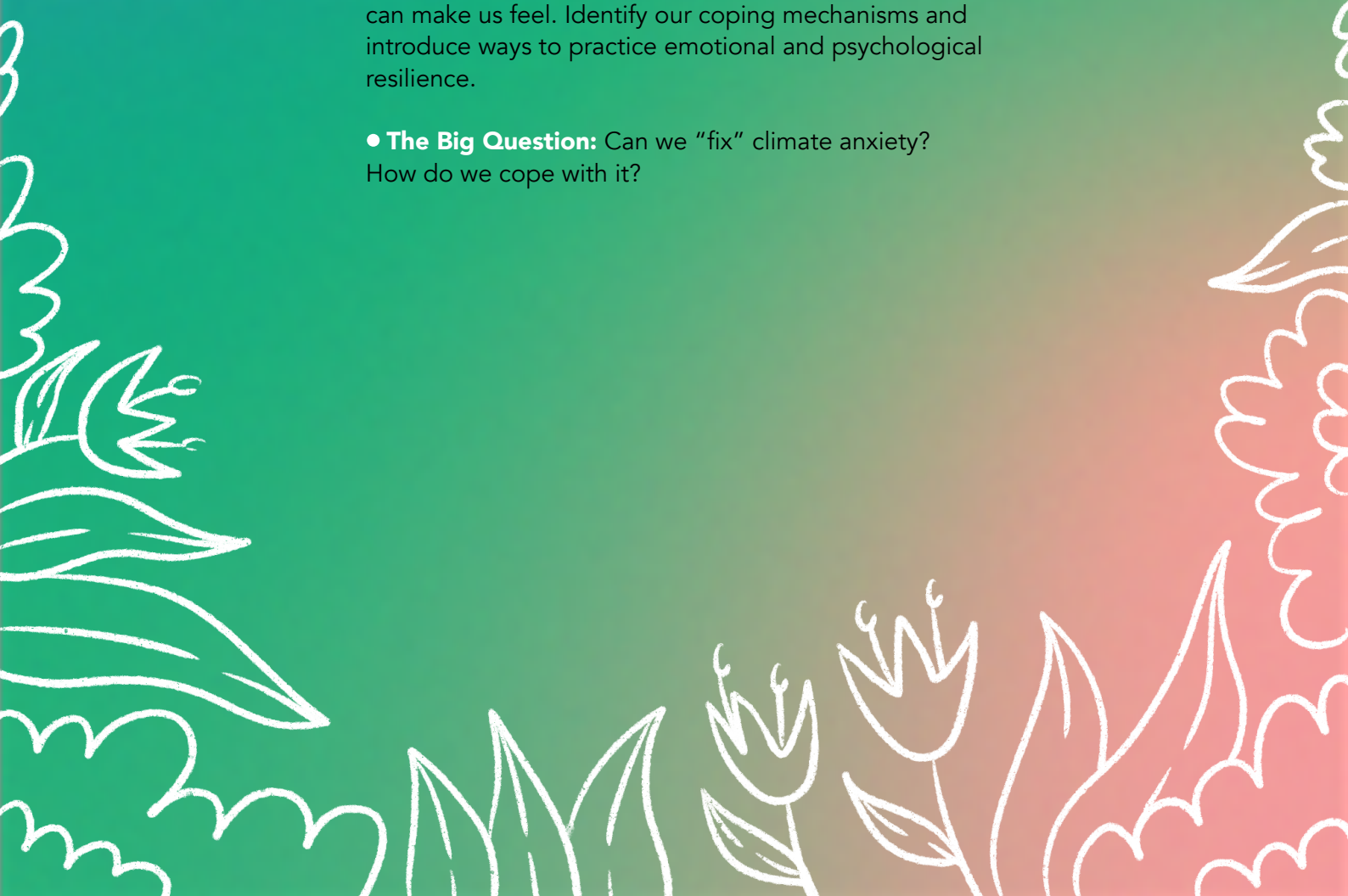
Clover shares her journey towards understanding her own climate anxiety and how she came to understand the meaning of "ecophobia". You can watch her TED talk, *What to do when climate change feels unstoppable*, [here](#).

MODULE 2

Can we “fix” Climate Anxiety? How do we cope with it?

- **The Purpose of this Discussion:** Debunk common misconceptions about climate anxiety. Explore the sometimes uncomfortable ways that the climate crisis can make us feel. Identify our coping mechanisms and introduce ways to practice emotional and psychological resilience.

- **The Big Question:** Can we “fix” climate anxiety?
How do we cope with it?



CAN WE "FIX" CLIMATE ANXIETY? HOW DO WE COPE WITH IT?

The Big Question



- Why Climate Anxiety is Normal, Healthy and Rational: Advice from Two Climate Psychology Experts

+ In this video, you will be listening to the advice of two established experts in the field of climate psychology:

- Caroline Hickman, a Psychotherapist and Lecturer from the University of Bath
- Psychoanalyst and writer Anouchka Grose, author of *A Guide to Eco-Anxiety - How to Protect the Planet and Your Mental Health*.

You'll hear them tackle common misconceptions that arise when we discuss climate anxiety and other climate-related emotions.

+ Three main takeaways that educators, parents, guardians and community leaders can learn from Caroline Hickman and Anouchka Grose are:

- **1) Climate anxiety is rational, healthy and normal:** discomfort is the emotionally congruent and understandable response that we feel when we start to wake up, and become aware of what is going on in the world.
- **2) Climate anxiety may display itself in many ways, and may change from day to day:** anxiety is often the first emotion that we experience when we feel threatened or uncertain, but this may also show up as panic, anger, grief, sadness, motivation, urgency or numbness.
- **3) Climate anxiety is not something that should be "fixed", but rather something that we must learn to accept, manage and channel:** especially for young people, it is important not to dismiss or downplay their emotional response to distressing climate-related information. Rather, we must encourage emotional resilience and intelligence.



CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

1 ESTABLISH A SAFE SPACE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS, AND SET THE CONTEXT

In the last module, we spoke about how the climate crisis makes us feel. In this module, we're going to be talking about how we can manage and cope with those strong emotions.

- **To start off with**, ask participants to write down 2 things that help them to feel calm. This could be a place, colour, food, person or piece of music.

2 IN EPISODE 1, we watched Mitzi Jonelle Tan and Charlotte Alcala, both from the Philippines, describing what it feels like to witness the firsthand impacts of the climate crisis.

If you didn't watch it together, show this portion of the episode to the participants again. You can find it in **Episode 1: What Is Climate Anxiety? | Seat At The Table**, from time 14.07 to time 20.03

- **In your introduction to the class, we suggest you say:**

People around the world experience the climate crisis differently. For some of us, we hear about it on the news, on social media, or from our peers; but when we go outside, it may not be immediately evident. For many young people in countries most affected by climate change, climate anxiety is something that they experience everyday. Today, we're going to watch a video about young people in the Philippines and how they cope with climate anxiety.

Trigger warning: in this video, there are mentions of extreme mental distress and fear of dying. Please use your best discretion when reviewing and showing this video.

3 LEAD A REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- **After showing the video**, here is how we suggest leading the reflection. Ask participants: *What are some of the ways that you see people in the Philippines coping with their own climate anxiety and fear for the future?*

3 themes to help participants identify:

- **Building community** - connecting to others and banding together in the face of uncertainty, instead of isolating oneself.
- **Immersing yourself in nature** - connecting to the places that you care about to remind yourself of what you're fighting for.
- **Talking about your feelings** - expressing yourself when you feel anxious or scared, instead of bottling up these emotions.

CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

4 PAIR PARTICIPANTS OFF, TO COMPLETE INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Invite participants to identify their own methods of emotional and psychological resilience. With a partner, invite participants to brainstorm 3 tools for coping with strong emotions.

Ask them to reflect on activities that might bring a sense of calm, help them make sense of uncomfortable feelings, or feel more grounded in the present moment.























● **Optional:** Following this partner-sharing activity (or in place of it), you can share the list below with participants; ask them to pick their top 3 activities; and share with a partner why they chose these.

Project the following list onto the screen:

- Which habits and activities do I turn to in the face of stress or uncertainty?
- Which of these have I found useful in the past; or how might I apply these to climate distress in the future?

4.1 Check off all that apply below

Note: Note: These are meant to support me in times of trouble, but I won't always feel better immediately. When I am faced with challenging climate emotions, I should allow myself the space and time to feel what I need to. **When facing climate distress in the future, I can...**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Speak with a trusted friend or family member | <input type="checkbox"/>  Meditate |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Connect with an adult (including a counsellor or therapist) to talk through what I'm experiencing | <input type="checkbox"/>  Take a shower |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Call a helpline to access peer support | <input type="checkbox"/>  Knit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  Take small steps to be part of climate solutions, such as recycling, eating a plant-based meal, or choosing to buy a product without palm oil | <input type="checkbox"/>  Squeeze a stress ball or play with a fidget toy |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Connect with a community that inspires me to take action | <input type="checkbox"/>  Develop your spiritual or religious practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Identify and learn about positive solutions that already exist | <input type="checkbox"/>  Connect with nature by going outside, watering the houseplants, or listening to nature sounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Journal | <input type="checkbox"/>  Listen to calming music ([lofi] playlists on YouTube, Spotify, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Get moving: this includes taking a quick stretch or going for a walk/run | <input type="checkbox"/>  Take time to cry |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Drink water or herbal tea (e.g. chamomile or lavender) | <input type="checkbox"/>  Take a break from the news and social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Get creative! Draw, paint, craft, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/>  Try to smile—remind yourself that climate distress is rooted in love and compassion |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Eat a meal that nourishes me and is good for the planet (think: zero waste & plant-based) | <input type="checkbox"/>  Read a book |

Anything else that helps you cope with your climate emotions?



MODULE 2

Further Reading

4.2 Why this activity?

At *Force of Nature*, one of our favourite quotes is, “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” We can’t achieve outer sustainability without inner sustainability, which is why it’s so important to reflect on how you can take care of yourself — especially when navigating climate-related distress. Completing this reflection in a safe, controlled environment can offer participants a personalised resource to return to whenever they might need some self-care.

+ Facilitator footnote:

Teachers are faced with the task of educating young people about the reality of the future that they have inherited, but they are also faced with the task of equipping students with the tools to reclaim this future.

There are ways to teach young people about the climate crisis without only piling on negative information. Indeed, it’s essential that we don’t perpetuate a one-dimensional and harmful narrative. Here are two examples of how you, in your teachings, might balance negative frames with positive ones.

Sharing inspiring stories, solutions and individuals:

- Introduce a piece of “good news”, or a solution that you’ve learned about.
- Showcase an inspiring person who’s doing something to solve a problem in their community.
 - **IDEA:** invite participants to research their own solutions or change-makers and share them with the group.

Unpacking the problems:

- When introducing a difficult piece of news or media, invite participants to process the feelings this might elicit: e.g. reflecting on how this content makes them feel.
- Then, share a solution or mitigation strategy that already exists to this problem.
- If you’re unsure of the solutions, invite participants to brainstorm how they might address the problem.

Encourage them to think outside of the box:

- How can governments help?
- How can companies help?
- How can teachers and educators help?
- How can activists help?
- How can children and young people help?
- How can parents and guardians help?





MODULE 2

Further Reading

+ Disclaimer: Mental Health

While climate anxiety is a normal, healthy and rational response, it can also be extremely overwhelming for young people; sometimes, it may be a sign or manifestation of deeper underlying mental health concerns.

It is important to understand when climate anxiety becomes a safeguarding concern. If you are worried about a young person's mental health and their ability to cope safely, it is important to take action immediately (such as notifying a parent, legal guardian, or safeguarding officer, depending on your context).

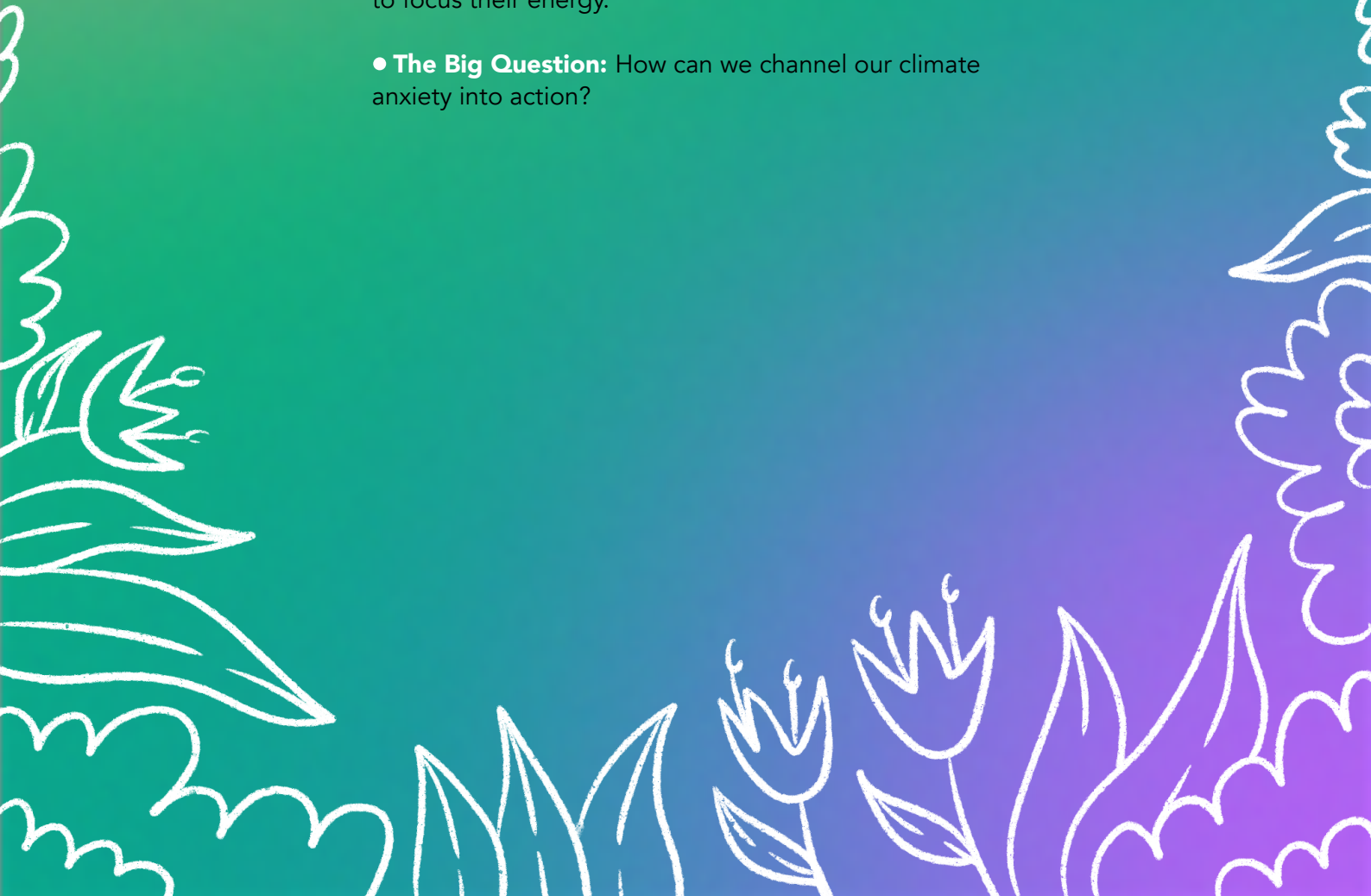
If you're unaware of the support systems in place, we invite you to take a look at the Mental Health Resources we've included in the Introduction of this Discussion Guide. These are a solid starting point to signpost participants toward, should the need arise.



MODULE 3

How can we channel our Climate Anxiety into action?

- **The Purpose of this Discussion:** Introduce taking action as an outlet for channeling our climate anxiety. Guide participants through identifying where they want to focus their energy.
- **The Big Question:** How can we channel our climate anxiety into action?



HOW CAN WE CHANNEL OUR CLIMATE ANXIETY INTO ACTION?

The Big Question



- Mitzi Jonelle Tan: Mental Health on the Front Lines of the Climate Crisis

+ In this video, you will be hearing from Mitzi Jonelle Tan: a Climate Justice Activist from the Philippines, who lives in a community that is being hit by typhoons exacerbated by the climate crisis. In the past 20 years, Mitzi's home country has had the highest number of extreme weather events across the globe, experiencing the 3 strongest storm landfalls in recorded history. Mitzi grew up afraid of drowning in her own bedroom. But she's doing something incredible with her climate anxiety; she's turning it into action.

+ **Trigger warning:** in this video, there are mentions of extreme mental distress and fear of dying. Please use your best discretion when reviewing and showing this video.



CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

1 ESTABLISH A SAFE SPACE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS, AND SET THE CONTEXT

Participants will have just watched **Episode 2: Grieving for Earth: How to Cope with Climate Anxiety | Seat At The Table**. In this module, we explore how taking climate action can help to channel and harness some of our climate anxiety. Sometimes, the hardest place is knowing where to start - so we will be asking participants to reflect on where they might want to focus their energy toward action.

Before presenting Mitzi's video, ask participants to sit with a partner and share a story about an action they've taken previously (big or small) — in response to a problem they care about. Then, prompt them to share how they felt when taking this action.

When have you taken action before?

Can you think of anybody who has taken action?

- 💡 It might help to share examples relevant to their situation or community.
- 💡 If participants have trouble identifying a time when they have taken action, ask them to share with their partner a piece of climate action that they've found particularly inspiring, and then identify why they chose this example.

2 WITH YOUR STUDENTS, WATCH THE VIDEO OF MITZI SHARING HER STORY

In your introduction to the class, we suggest you say:

In Episode 2 of Seat at the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety, Jack met Scarlett Westbrook, an inspiring young activist from the UK. Scarlett is finding ways to channel her climate anxiety into agency, by demanding action from governments and institutions. Scarlett has combined her activism with her passion for politics by challenging the lack of climate curriculum in the UK's education system.

In the video I'm showing you today, you will see another example of a young person like yourself who is taking action on the issues they care most about.

Mitzi is using her storytelling skills to bring awareness to what is happening in her home country of the Philippines. After we watch this video, I will invite you to reflect on where your own passions lie, and where you might be able to start taking action.





CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

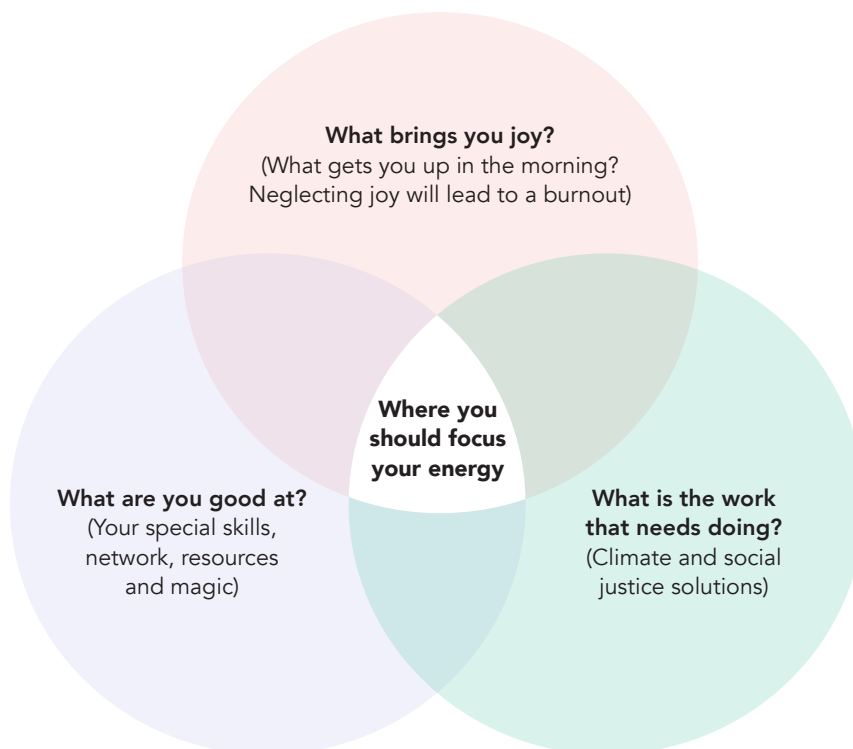
3 LEAD A REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- **After showing the video,** here is how we suggest leading the reflection.

In this activity, I will be asking you to reflect on where you can focus your energy and channel your eco-anxiety.

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, co-founder of the climate initiative The All We Can Save Project, has a great framework for identifying where to focus your energy when taking action. She shares that it's at the intersection of these three things:

- **Sphere 1:** What are you good at?
- **Sphere 2:** What brings you joy?
- **Sphere 3:** What problem are you passionate about?



You may wish to project the above diagram onto the screen.

Ask participants to draw three circles, and then guide them through filling in the circles with their individual answers (suggested: 3-5 minutes per circle). You might want to personally complete this activity ahead of time so you can provide examples from your own Venn diagram.

Optional: You may choose to project this Venn Diagram up onto the board so that all the students can see it as you explain the activity.



CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

3.1 Why this activity?

Powerlessness often stems from not knowing how we can make a difference. It's a combination of overwhelm (feeling that we need to take action on all issues, and attempting to spread ourselves thin across them), and not knowing what we bring to the table.

Impact comes from focus. It helps to narrow in on a single problem that ignites a fire in our belly; reflect on the skills we have to solve that problem; and frame action through the lens of what fulfills us, instead of self-sacrifice which can often lead to exhausting and unsustainable forms of activism. By leading participants on this journey, they can begin to find their piece of the puzzle - and then use climate anxiety as the fuel that motivates them.

When Jack speaks with Caroline Hickman about her work surveying 10,000 young people in 10 countries, she underscores the amount of feelings of betrayal and abandonment that many children and young people feel toward their governments. It can often feel like the weight of the world is on the shoulders of the youth, who are inheriting humanity's greatest problems.

4 FACILITATE A CONVERSATION ABOUT INDIVIDUAL ACTION VS. COLLECTIVE ACTION

Close the session by reminding participants that they alone are not responsible for solving the climate crisis (just as one person alone did not cause the crisis). Encourage them to find other like-minded young people to take action alongside: if an action group doesn't already exist in the community, this could be a great opportunity to start one.





MODULE 3

Further Reading



In Episode 2: Grieving for Earth: How to Cope with Climate Anxiety | Seat At The Table, Jack speaks with the Prime Minister of Iceland, Katrín Jakobsdóttir. She emphasises how important it is that we use climate anxiety to fuel our action, and reiterates that everyone can make a difference.

“It is so important for us to use this anxiety, and turn it into action.”

At the same time, she understands that young people should not shoulder the sole responsibility of solving the climate crisis:

“But I also always say, when I’m talking to those young people, everybody can make a difference, but it is also very important to hold governments and big corporations accountable.”

+ Facilitator footnote:

If you’re worried about your participants being too worried, frightened or concerned, it can be tempting to try and downplay the scale of the crisis. However, most young people are apprised of the climate crisis through the news, social media and conversations with their peers — and feeling “kept in the dark” can heighten the feelings of betrayal mentioned by Caroline Hickman. Of all the conversations had at Force of Nature, young people around the world have shared what a relief it is for them to speak openly about how they feel (ensuring this space is facilitated with care and sensitivity).



MODULE 3

Further Reading

+ Facilitator footnote:

● Eco-gaslighting:

The practice of leading someone to doubt the validity of the environment-related feelings through their statements or actions. Examples could include saying to someone experiencing climate-related distress that they "shouldn't feel anxious" or it could be as simple as not giving someone the space they need to share their climate-related distress. Eco-gaslighting is often done unintentionally.

+ Disclaimer: Mental Health

While climate anxiety is a normal, healthy and rational response, it can also be extremely overwhelming for young people; sometimes, it may be a sign or manifestation of deeper underlying mental health concerns.

In this discussion guide, we've provided some suggestions of mental health resources available to students if their climate anxiety is great. When offering these resources to students, be sure to frame them not as "you need help because your problems are too great or you're crazy", but instead as "I can see this is impacting you and a professional can be helpful to help you process these emotions". See the box below for helpful - and potentially unhelpful - responses to a participant divulging their climate-related emotions.

Helpful responses:

Compassion and understanding

- Listening to someone's feelings non-judgmentally.
- Reflecting on your own climate-related feelings and actions.
- Seeking to understand someone else's feelings.
- Understanding that someone else's feelings are valid and real, even if you don't share them.
- Creating safe spaces for people to share their feelings.
- Learning to 'sit with', rather than 'fix', someone's feelings.
- Using the terminology the person you are speaking to is comfortable with (e.g. climate-related feelings, eco-anxiety, climate trauma).
- Offering someone support that's specific to their lived experience (for instance whether they have experienced or expect to experience extreme weather, or whether they simply observe it from afar).

Unhelpful responses:

Eco-gaslighting and emotional invalidation

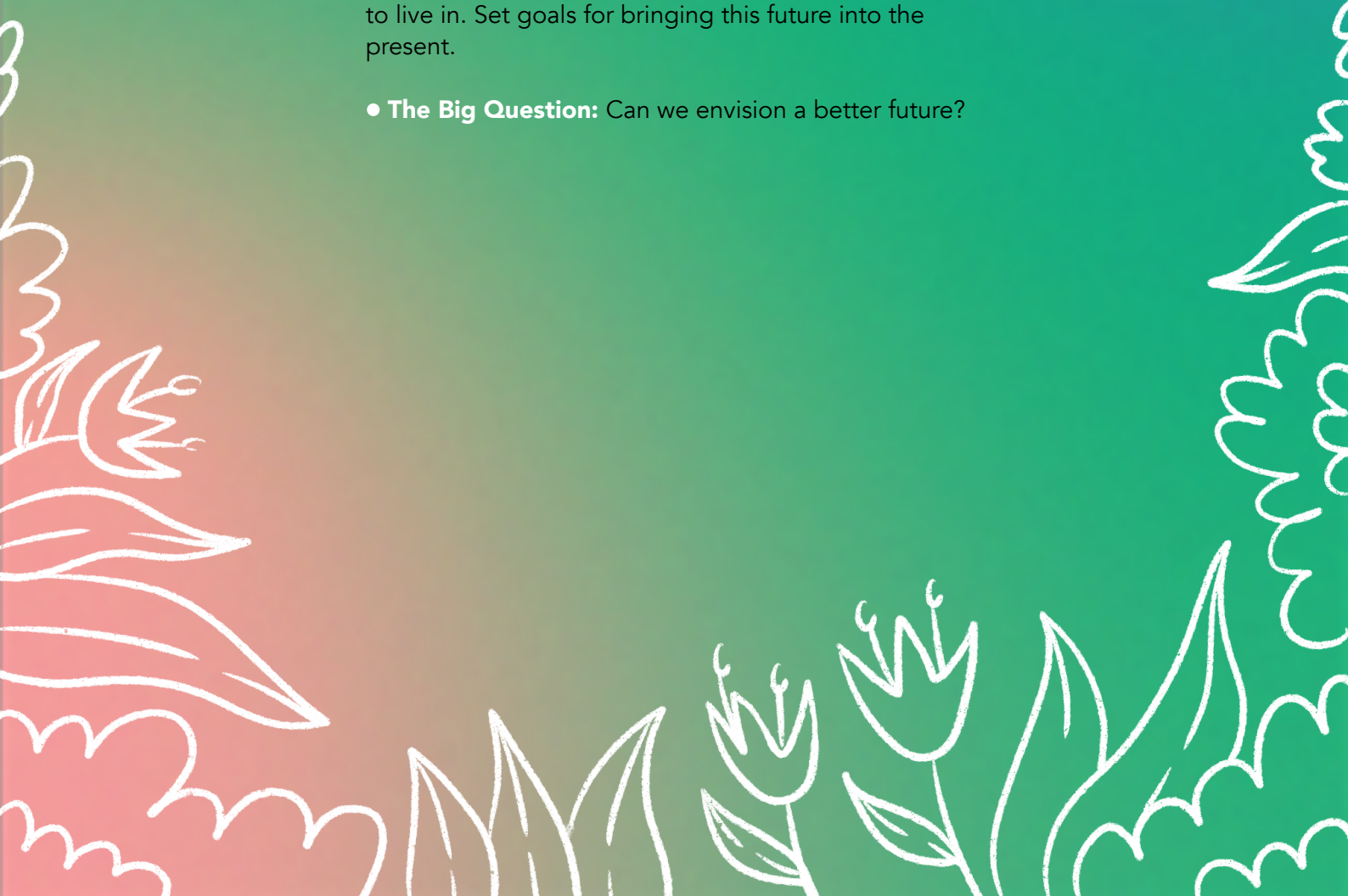
- Telling someone their feelings are wrong, unhelpful, or "over the top".
- Trying to 'fix' someone's feelings if they make you uncomfortable.
- Jumping to the conclusion that someone's feelings are indication of a disorder or dysfunction.
- Creating spaces where honest sharing and communication feels unwelcome.
- Expecting someone to live and function as if the climate crisis isn't real, or climate inaction is unimportant.
- Telling someone they must be a 'hypocrite' if they say they care about the climate but still contribute to it through their behaviour.
- Mocking or blaming people who care about the climate crisis for trying their best to help. Perhaps the most extreme form of this is criminalising climate protestors.
- Judging someone who cares about the climate as too 'naive' to have a valid opinion.



MODULE 4

Can we envision a better future?

- **The Purpose of this Discussion:** Re-frame the climate crisis as an opportunity to re-imagine a better world. Invite participants to think about what future they want to live in. Set goals for bringing this future into the present.
- **The Big Question:** Can we envision a better future?



CLASSROOM CONTENT

Suggested module plan

1 IN EPISODE 2, we watched Jack speak with Maja Rúnarsdóttir

if you didn't watch it together, show this portion of the episode to the participants again. You can find it in **Episode 2: Grieving for Earth: How to Cope with Climate Anxiety | Seat At The Table**, from time 1.29 to time 7.09.

- **In your introduction to the class, we suggest you say:**

In this video, you will see Jack travelling to Iceland to meet a young woman who spends her life helping people understand the power and beauty of the glaciers that she grew up around. Maja shares what it was like to grow up surrounded by glaciers - and now, as the planet warms, what it's like to watch them become a symbol of the climate crisis. Through Jack and Maja's conversation, Maja helps us understand her strong connection to the glaciers and her feelings about losing them.

2 ASK PARTICIPANTS WHAT FEELINGS THEY THINK MAJA HAS ABOUT THE GLACIERS

Go around the room and ask them to identify 3 emotions that Maja feels.

- Alongside identifying difficult or uncomfortable emotions such as grief and anxiety, encourage them to focus on values such as love, compassion, stewardship and wonder.

3 LEAD A REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Ask participants to spend 10 minutes reflecting on a series of place-based questions. This can be individual journalling, drawing, or sharing in pairs / small groups.

- What is a place in the world that you think is worth saving?
- Describe this place. What does it look like? What does it sound like? Who else lives there?
- If you were there right now, what would you be doing?



CAN WE ENVISION A BETTER FUTURE?

The Big Question



- Clover Hogan: Visualising a Future of Your Own Imagining

+ Visualisation is a powerful technique that can help relieve climate anxiety and create space for other feelings such as hope, curiosity and imagination.

In this visualisation at the end of our journey together, Clover invites participants to tune into their emotions once more. She then invites them to visit a future of their own imagining.

4 CHECK-OUT BY TAKING PARTICIPANTS THROUGH A GUIDED VISUALISATION

For our final module, Clover has recorded a visualisation that she has delivered to thousands of participants through Force of Nature's programmes. Invite participants to sit in a circle and play the recording of Clover's visualisation.

Alternatively, feel free to narrate your own visualisation. If you take this approach, we encourage you to write some notes beforehand and remember to pace your own breathing as you speak.

4.1 Why this activity?

Visualisation is a powerful mental health aid and tool for bringing climate solutions into reality. With climate disasters appearing in the media in a seemingly never-ending barrage of negative news, it is easy to forget that the flip side of how much there is to lose is **how much we have to save**.

In this visualisation, inviting young people to imagine a better world reminds them why we're feeling anxious in the first place; because we have a beautiful, vibrant world to fight for.





CONGRATULATIONS!

You've completed the final module. Yet this is by no means the end: if you've enjoyed facilitating this journey for others, this may just be the start of something beautiful.

Wondering what to do next? Here are some ideas:

- Invite this group to continue meeting regularly to have candid climate conversations
- Recruit another group of young people to take through the programme
- Train up a young person or two from this cohort, to facilitate their own programme with a group of peers or, if you're pressed for time: simply share the link to this resource with someone you think might benefit from it!

CONCLUSION:

**Climate Anxiety, Education and
Mental Health Resources**



CONCLUSION:

Climate Anxiety, Education and Mental Health Resources

+ Mental Health Resources:

Mental health is highly personal. The availability of, and accessibility to, resources varies based on community context.

While climate anxiety is a normal, healthy and rational response, it can also be extremely overwhelming for young people; sometimes, it may be a sign or manifestation of deeper underlying mental health concerns. We highly suggest that you have a safeguarding plan in place, in case a young person shows signs of needing extra support.

In addition to the suggested list provided at the beginning of this resource, Force of Nature hosts a list of Mental Health Resources on their website.

This is a good place to start.

Because Force of Nature is based in the UK, many of these resources are UK-centred. Should you have any additions, including from a different country or region, or have resources that are specific to BIPOC communities, please submit these via the contact form on www.forceofnature.xyz so that we can continue to build a list of useful and relevant resources with your input.

Mind is also an excellent place to start when seeking resources to support young people.

Thank you for using this Discussion Guide for Seat At the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety. If you are hoping to share this with your colleagues, or with the administration at an educational institution, consider the following information:

CONCLUSION:

Climate Anxiety, Education and Mental Health Resources

+ Why are schools an important part of fighting the climate crisis?

Schools are the natural gathering place for young minds, and often at the centre of communities. Naturally, they serve as an important launchpad for young people to become custodians of a future by their own design.

Schools have an opportunity to a) support young people in dealing with the strong emotions that come with acknowledging the magnitude of the climate crisis, and b) channel these feelings into action.

Nadhim Zahawi recognises that there is a lack of support and resources for teachers in the age of the climate crisis. "There is a huge responsibility on teachers to educate young people on the crisis. Teachers can have a profound impact on young people, but they need to be given the space, materials and time."

"Young people are absolutely right to feel anxious," Nadhim Zahawi says to Jack in Episode 1 of *Seat At the Table: Let's Talk About Climate Anxiety*. "There is a body of evidence that demonstrates that the anxiety comes from a lack of agency."



In Episode 1: *What Is Climate Anxiety?* / *Seat At The Table*, Jack speaks with Nadhim Zahawi, the Secretary of State for Education, to discuss why the curriculum in the UK isn't changing as fast as the climate is.

CONCLUSION:

Climate Anxiety, Education and Mental Health Resources

+ Are there enough resources in schools for young people and teachers to handle this topic?

- A Seat At The Table



In Episode 2: *Grieving for Earth: How to Cope with Climate Anxiety | Seat At The Table*, Jack speaks with Scarlett Westbrook, a young activist who works with Teach the Future to have the climate emergency education bill pushed through parliament into law.

+ THE SHORT ANSWER IS...NO!

"I think definitely not," says Scarlett. "I'm a part of Teach the Future, a campaign to implement climate education widely. Not just in sciences, but into every single subject, because everybody is going to be affected by the climate crisis, regardless of their vocation."

"Without education we don't have the tools needed to work on solutions, or even work on coping ourselves. Looking at climate anxiety, for example, it is easy to feel anxious about things you don't know about."

"This also means that teachers are given the tools and resources needed to teach students about the climate crisis."

Teachers urgently need to be equipped with the tools and resources to help students understand, cope with and take action on the crisis.

CONCLUSION:

Climate Anxiety, Education and Mental Health Resources

Schools are failing to provide young people with the education and tools necessary to learn about the climate crisis, and do so in a way that motivates them to action. In the UK, 70% of teachers feel they have not been properly trained to teach about climate change; while 77% of students say that thinking about climate change makes them anxious(1).

Young people today are often referred to as the “climate generation”. However, many young people feel disillusioned about the world they’re inheriting, and excluded from the decisions governing our future. Only when young people are given the space to feel, and the resources necessary to channel these feelings into action, can we expect them to become climate leaders.

1: A Teach the Future survey. [inews.co.uk/news/education/climate-change-uk-teachers-training-teach-global-warming-schools-914301](https://www.inews.co.uk/news/education/climate-change-uk-teachers-training-teach-global-warming-schools-914301)

In using this resource, you’re a part of a wave of educators taking the opportunity to help young people forge better relationships with themselves, each other and the planet.

We sincerely hope this resource has been useful. Plus, we’d love to hear from you (including how you might have adapted material, or what you’d like to see in version 2.0). Drop us a message via the contact form on www.forceofnature.xyz.





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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

A partnership with

**SEAT
AT
THE TABLE**
LET'S TALK ABOUT **CLIMATE ANXIETY**

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