

Eco-Emotion Lending Library Game Educator Guide: Grades 9-12

Background

This activity explores the connection between climate change and mental health. Climate change has been identified as the dominant threat to modern health. (1) **Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, especially on their mental health.** Youth are experiencing feelings of helplessness, anxiety, grief, paralysis, and fatalism, as well as an increasing prevalence of psychiatric disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and suicide. (2,3)

Educators play a key role in promoting positive mental health for youth. **A majority of educators feel that the education system is not adequately addressing climate change, but do not feel that they have the knowledge or resources necessary to bring climate education to their classrooms.** (4)

When discussing climate change, the goal is not to eliminate negative emotions but to manage them. One of the priority strategies to help manage emotions is to provide spaces for youth to express their emotions, find community, and feel validated.(5) This activity will help you facilitate the sharing and validation of emotions in your classroom, while creating topical connections to curriculum expectations.

This activity is designed for secondary students, grades 9-12, and could be used in health, science, or language classes. The activity itself is expected to take 25-30 minutes, and the additional resources can extend the lesson by as much as is desired. **This kit provides everything needed to run the activity, and includes pre and post activity lesson plans, subject-specific recommended readings, assessment prompts, and mental health resources for afterward.**

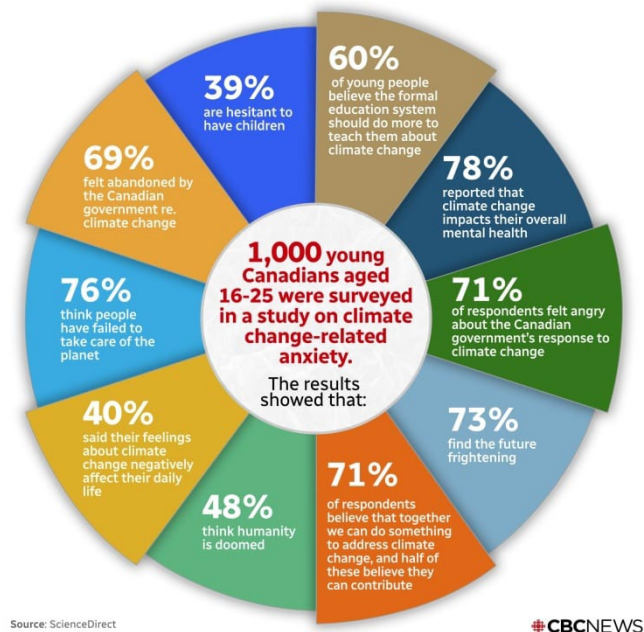


Figure 1: Young Canadian Perspectives on Climate Change Related Anxiety (6)

pg. 1

Lesson Goals

1. Establish a space to express eco-emotions and create community amongst students
2. Validate eco-emotions and explore the relationship between climate change and mental health
3. Provide support and resources for students needing assistance managing eco-emotions

Materials

- 1 x storage bin
- 1 x educator guide
- 1 x bucket
- 1 set of 20 laminated prompts (**See Appendix 1 for a printable copy if using the digital Educator Guide**)
- 1 x oven mitt

Pre-Activity Lesson

To begin, the educator must introduce the class to the “[Climate Emotion Wheel](#).” The wheel can be printed and distributed or projected on the board. The class can read over the emotions individually or collectively.

If a more detailed lesson plan is desired, we suggest the Climate Mental Health Network’s [Lesson Plan for Writing and Eco Emotions](#). Before the activity, it would be useful to watch this [trailer](#) and to read Reading A provided in Part One of the lesson plan.

Climate Emotions Wheel



Climate Emotions Wheel © 2020 by Arun Komarath, Panu Pihkala, Sarah Neveloff, Megan Stone, Julie Brown, Kathryn Corrigan & licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Climate Mental Health Network
 ClimateMentalHealth.Net
 based on research by Panu Pihkala: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clim.2020.101366>

Figure 2: Climate Emotion Wheel by Climate Mental Health Network (7)

pg. 2

Activity: Burning Questions

The activity “Burning Questions” is a musical-chairs style game with embedded prompts connected to the Climate Emotion Wheel. Students will share their opinion on each prompt by moving or remaining still. Students will have the opportunity to observe shared emotions amongst them and their peers. The expected duration is 25-30 minutes.

Instructions

1. Arrange chairs in a large circle. The number of chairs must be one fewer than the number of students in the group. Select one student to be removed from the circle to be the *reader*, and have all others sit in the chairs.
2. The *reader* will read aloud one of the prompts from the bucket. All students who agree with the prompt must get up out of their chair, and race to sit down in a new chair. The *reader* must also race to sit in any chair. One student will be left standing, and that student becomes the new *reader*.
 - a. If racing in a circle is inaccessible due to space or mobility, have students raise their hands instead of sitting in a chair. The *reader* can now be selected by taking turns around the circle, instead of by competition.
3. Continue this cycle until all the prompts have been read.
4. When the prompts are completed, invite all students to sit in the circle. Invite the students to ask each other questions about the prompts they just heard. When a student is asking their *burning question*, they will wear the oven mitt. The oven mitt can be passed in a circle to give each student a turn to ask a question or can be passed to students who volunteer to ask a question.

Post-Activity Discussion

Following the activity, a take-up discussion will be useful. We suggest working through Part 2, 3, and/or 4 of the Climate Mental Health Network’s [Lesson Plan for Writing and Eco Emotions](#). These lesson plans include teacher scripts, recommended readings, and sample discussion questions. The expected durations for Parts 2, 3, and 4 are 20-40 minutes, 12-20 minutes, and 15-30 minutes respectively.

If educators are interested in collecting student work; Part 2 includes reading with response questions, Part 3 includes the option to have students divide into smaller groups and record notes, and Part 4 includes instructions to write a narrative or persuasive essay about the environment and climate change.

Recommended Readings by Subject

Health and Physical Education

- [The Unspoken Complexity of Self Care](#)
- [Is humanity doomed? Young Canadians share how climate change is affecting their outlook](#)
- [Exploring Climate Change and Mental Health](#)
- [Climate Impacts on Health](#)
- [Climate Change and Indigenous People's Health in Canada](#)

Science

- [Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet](#)
- [Habitat loss, climate change, and emerging conservation challenges in Canada](#)
- [Six ways climate change is affecting Canada](#)
- [Climate change: Ontario Nature](#)
- [Indigenous Knowledges and Climate Change](#)

English

- [This is the world being left to us by adults](#)
- [Climate Literacy: The essential principles of climate science](#)
- [Climate Change Fiction for Students and Teachers](#)
- [The Lorax Revisited: A Modern Tale of Environmental Responsibility](#)
- [First Hand: How Climate Change is Impacting Animals in the Canadian Arctic](#)

Additional Mental Health Resources

- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario](#)
- [Jack.org](#)
- [Good 2 Talk](#)
- [Strong Minds Strong Kids](#)
- [Climate Mental Health Network](#)

Curriculum Links

Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum

Grade Level	Strand Connections by Course
Grade 9	PPL1O: C3.2 [PS, IS]
Grade 10	PPL2O: C1.1 [PS, IS], C2.3 [PS, IS, CT]
Grade 11	PPL3O: C1.4 , C3.4 [PS, IS], C3.5 [PS, IS, CT]
Grade 12	PPL4O: C2.3 [PS, IS, CT], C2.4 [PS], C2.5 [PS, CT]

Ontario Science Curriculum

Grade Level	Strand Connections by Course
Grade 9	SNC1W: A2.3, A2.4, B1.1, B1.2, B2.6
Grade 10	SNC2P: D1.1, D1.2, D2.7 SNC2D: D1.1, D2.9
Grade 11	SBI 3C: B1.2, E1.2 SBI3U: B1.2, C1.2, E1.2 SVN3M: B1.2, B2.4, B2.5, B3.1, B3.3, B3.4, B3.5, C1.1, C1.2, C2.1, C3.2, C3.5, D1.2, E1.2 SVN 3E: B1.2, C1.1, C.12, C2.1, C2.2, C3.1
Grade 12	SBI4U: E1.2, F1.1

Ontario English Curriculum

Grade Level	Strand Connections by Course
Grade 9	ENL1W: A3.1, A3.2, A3.3, D1.2, D1.3
Grade 10	ENG 2D: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 ENG 2P: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5
Grade 11	ENG3U: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 ENG3C: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 ENG3E: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5
Grade 12	ENG4U: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 ENG4C: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 ENG4E: Oral Communication 2.6, Reading and Literature Studies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.2, Media Studies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Assessment

The following prompts can be used to assess student learning. The students could respond to the prompts through 3-5 sentence “exit tickets,” formal written responses, or group discussions.

- Health and Physical Education
 - Describe a personal experience and how it caused or alleviated one of the emotions listed on the Climate Emotion Wheel. Based on your participation in the activity, do you think your peers also experience this eco-emotion?
 - Describe how climate change can play a role in mental illness. Name some strategies to manage eco-emotions and promote mental wellbeing.
 - Describe how climate change could also be connected to physical health. Consider injury prevention, addictions, infectious diseases, and healthy eating.
- Science
 - Reflect on a climate event you have learned about (an extreme weather event, a change in biodiversity, pollution, etc.). Name some of the causes of this event. Describe the eco-emotions that would be expected in the impacted community.
 - Describe a technology that causes or prevents climate change. Describe any advantages or disadvantages this technology has for the mental health of the surrounding community.
 - Reflect on the impact of climate change on local ecosystems. What eco-emotions are relevant to the surrounding community? How might the impact be different on Indigenous communities compared to non-Indigenous communities?
- English
 - Describe an experience of yours and how it caused or alleviated one of the emotions listed on the Climate Emotion Wheel. Based on your participation in the activity, do you think your peers also experience this eco-emotion?
 - Read one of the recommended readings linked above. What eco-emotions are demonstrated? Do you agree or disagree with the message of the piece? Why?
 - Consider a text read in class or a piece of media you have recently viewed. How is a connection or disconnection to the environment demonstrated? What eco-emotions are relevant to this piece?

References

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Appendix 1: Printable Question Prompts

I feel anger when I think about the environment
I feel positive when I think about the environment
I feel scared when I think about the environment
I feel sad when I think about the environment
I think my classmates share similar eco-emotions to me
I think my siblings, friends, teammates, and neighbours share similar eco-emotions to me
I think teachers at my school share similar eco-emotions to me
I think adults in my community (family members, neighbours, coaches) share similar eco-emotions to me
I take part in climate action that inspires me (documentaries, social media, community events)
I feel anxiety when I think about the environment
I feel grief when I see changes in the local environment
I feel guilt when I think about my own impact on the environment
I feel disappointment when I see news and policy about the environment
I feel outrage when I hear anti-science arguments in the media
I feel powerless when I think about the state of the world
I feel inspired when I learn about environmental activism
I feel gratitude when I go outside and connect with nature
I feel empowered when I talk about environmental activism with my peers
I think that feeling angry about the environment can be motivating to make change
I think that sharing my sadness about the environment allows me to connect with others

