

## CLIMATE ANXIETY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM

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Eco-anxiety, also known as climate anxiety, is a term that defines the feelings of worry people feel in response to climate change. It's a relatively unexpected consequence of climate change and in recent years, the media and scientific research have been exploring how eco-anxiety is impacting people, especially the younger generations, around the world. The goal of my research was to explore the connection between eco-anxiety and environmental education as well as how this relationship in turn impacts involvement in activism. To address this, I interviewed 4 different environmental professionals on the Common Caws for Sustainability podcast: an ecofeminist philosopher-in-residence at an elementary school, a founder of an environmental activist organization, a president of a village tribal council, and a climate psychologist. Findings from the interviews suggest that education needs to be reframed in a manner that allows for inquiry; children should be able to ask questions about what's happening and receive honest answers. Emphasizing generational thinking in spaces of education is another key to better educate children. To alleviate eco-anxiety, the interviewees repeatedly mentioned finding groups of like-minded individuals to discuss and work through these feelings regarding climate change. These results provide guidance for educators and for parents/guardians to better prepare children for the climate crisis. Implementing steps in the current education system that motivate children to get involved in climate action without increasing levels of anxiety is crucial for slowing the effects of climate change and maintaining the mental health of the next generations.