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co-anxiety, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association in 2017, is a chronic fear of environmen-

tal doom, usually based on feelings of powerlessness about environmental change or climate change. Other associated terms include: eco-fear, eco-despair, eco-grief, eco-distress, and eco-angst.

Society is experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety relative to climate change (1). Seventy percent of Americans report they are worried about climate change; nearly 60% feel helpless (2). According to Global Action Plan, 77% of U.K. teenagers report feeling anxious when merely *thinking about* climate change. American teenagers report that climate change makes them feel scared (57%) and angry (52%) and they wish for their schools to engage with them more about climate change (3).

Uncertainty is believed to fuel anxiety. Humans are negatively impacted when exposed to information overload, as well as ambiguous, unspecified, and ubiquitous threat information (4). Technology has become a means for rapid flows of misinformation and disinformation. There is believed to be a contagious nature of emotion in social networks. We should learn from the ethnographies referenced in the editorial; self-expression is better if conveyed within acceptable boundaries to avoid threatening the long-term good for the collective.

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Uncertainty Tolerance (UT)

Recycling Eco-Anxiety into Eco-Empowerment

Eco-psychologists offer us coping mechanisms to mitigate the uncertainties underlying eco-anxiety. We must seek out accurate representations of the realities of climate change. Scientific findings (for/against) are often dismissed when it is inconvenient truth contrary to our currently-held beliefs. To avoid Uncertainty Intolerance (UI) with its consequential powerlessness and helplessness, we must learn effective management of emotions and problem-solving; focus on prosocial outcomes; and engage in mitigation actions individually, and socially (1), (2), (5). Action, though often inconvenient, can be a powerful antidote to helplessness and powerlessness (5).

This magazine represents our collective action. We strive for accurate representations of the (non) realities of climate change; AI/ML assist. Our prosocial community provides counterbalance to ambiguous, unspecified threats. We resist viewing problems as unsolvable. We model to others how to look at these challenges in a wider, holistic context. We also explore how to apply emerging solutions through AI/ML for effective problem-solving for society to be eco-empowered for eco-action. Thus, we

help society build Uncertainty Tolerance (UT) and thereby can help alleviate eco-anxiety (1), (5).

Author Information

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