

Americans report mental health effects of climate change, worry about future

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According to the latest Healthy Minds Monthly poll from the American Psychiatric Association (APA), 58% of adults believe climate change is already impacting the health of Americans and nearly half (48%) agree

that it's impacting the mental health of Americans. Half of adults (51%) are anxious about climate change's impact on future generations.

Among the 2,210 adults in a nationally representative sample polled by Morning Consult from March 19–21, 2022, more were worried about the [impact of climate change](#) on the planet (55%) than on their [mental health](#) (39%). They were split on how news about climate change affected their mood, with 42% saying it affected them some or a lot, and 43% not much or not at all.

"When you read about an [ice shelf](#) the size of the island of Manhattan breaking off Antarctica, it's a very tangible, dramatic representation of climate change's impact," said APA President Vivian Pender, M.D. "But there are so many unseen mental health impacts as well, whether it's in the anxiety over our children and grandchildren's future, or the trauma to those who are physically displaced by fires or violent storms."

Young people were more anxious about climate change. Of those aged 18–34, 66% were anxious about its effect on the planet, 51% were worried about its impact on their mental health, and 59% worried about its impact on [future generations](#). They were also more likely to believe it was already having an effect on the health (64%) and mental health (57%) of Americans.

"Climate change is a public health emergency, and we can't neglect mental health when we call it out," said APA Committee on Climate Change Chair Elizabeth Haase, M.D. "Our care for the planet is our care for ourselves, and by taking action we help ourselves with its mental health effects."

White people were the least likely to report anxiety over the [impact of climate change](#) on the planet (52%) versus Hispanics (62%), Black people (65%) or people of other ethnicities (66%). Those in the

northeast (57%) and western region (58%) of the country reported being more worried about the effect of climate change on the planet than those in the Midwest (50%) and the South (54%).

Among those polled, 53% believe [climate change](#) is caused by [human activity](#), 16% believe the cause is not yet determined, 13% believed it's caused by something other than [human activity](#), 8% don't believe in [climate change](#), and 11% had no opinion.

Those who rated their [mental health](#) as either fair or poor increased to nearly one-third of adults (31%) compared to 27% in February.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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