



TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE RESILIENCE EDUCATORS' TOOLBOX

Project Consortium:



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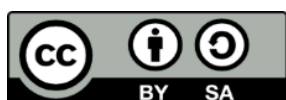
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Authors: RISE UP Project

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Introduction to the Project

The **RISE UP Project** responds to an emerging need within higher education: the integration of emotional resilience and psychological literacy into climate education. As the climate crisis intensifies, young adults increasingly report symptoms of **climate anxiety** a form of anticipatory stress rooted in the perception of environmental degradation and collective uncertainty about the future. Traditional education systems, while effective in transmitting scientific knowledge, often fail to address these psychological dimensions.

RISE UP introduces a transformative approach to climate education that bridges cognitive understanding with emotional and behavioural adaptation. The project's central aim is to strengthen the capacity of **Higher Education (HED) professionals** to recognize, contain, and work with the emotional responses that accompany climate awareness, such as grief, helplessness, or guilt, while fostering adaptive coping and prosocial engagement.

The project's framework draws upon **ecopsychology, positive psychology, trauma-informed education, and design thinking**. This multidisciplinary integration enables educators to approach climate education not merely as content delivery but as a relational, affective, and identity-shaping process.

The **Transformative Climate Resilience Educators Toolbox**, developed within WP2, provides practical methods and theoretical grounding to help educators cultivate resilience at both the individual and collective level. By equipping academic professionals with these competencies, RISE UP contributes to a more psychologically responsive and socially sustainable model of higher education.

The toolbox is informed by three core WP2 outcomes:

- **An Adapted GreenComp Framework for Young Adults**, tailored with psychological and pedagogical grounding to reflect the lived realities and emotional landscapes of students.
- **A Policy Brief**, distilling key findings and recommendations to guide educational policy in embedding climate resilience into curricula and training.
- And, of course, this **Toolbox**, a practical, versatile guide designed to support HED professionals in cultivating transformative climate resilience education.

RISE UP invites educators to become facilitators of hope, adaptability, and courage, planting seeds for a generation of thinkers, feelers, and changemakers.

Objectives of the Toolbox

The **Transformative Climate Resilience Educators Toolbox** aims to operationalize the RISE UP project's psychological and pedagogical objectives through applied tools, structured exercises, and reflective frameworks. It is designed to help educators integrate mental health awareness and emotional regulation within the broader context of climate education and sustainable development.

Specific objectives:

1. **Enhancing Emotional Competence in Education**

Support educators in understanding the emotional processes underlying climate anxiety, denial, and paralysis, and in applying methods to foster emotional containment, regulation, and meaning making in the classroom.

2. **Integrating Psychological Theory with Pedagogical Practice**

Provide educators with structured models drawn from psychodynamic theory, resilience research, and trauma-informed practice, enabling them to identify and respond to unconscious mechanisms such as projection, avoidance, or displacement related to ecological stress.

3. **Fostering Transformative Learning**

Encourage educators to facilitate reflection, narrative processing, and identity formation in students, transforming emotional reactions into adaptive insight and ethical motivation.

4. **Supporting Resilience and Agency**

Equip educators with evidence-based strategies from positive psychology and cognitive-behavioural interventions to build coping resources, self-efficacy, and community belonging in the context of ecological uncertainty.

5. **Establishing a Common Language for Emotional Sustainability**

Promote consistent use of terminology and practices across European higher education institutions, allowing for interdisciplinary dialogue between educators, psychologists, and sustainability experts.

In essence, the Toolbox positions educators not as therapists, but as emotionally attuned facilitators who can recognize the psychological dimensions of learning and create environments conducive to both cognitive and emotional growth.

Guidelines for Users

The **Transformative Climate Resilience Educators Toolbox** is a professional resource designed for Higher Education professionals, academic trainers, and facilitators who wish to integrate emotional, psychological, and social dimensions into climate education. It approaches teaching as an inherently relational and affective process, recognizing that the transmission of knowledge about climate change inevitably evokes complex psychological responses, ranging from anxiety and grief to denial, anger, or guilt.

The materials contained in this Toolbox do not aim to transform educators into therapists, but to provide them with the **psychological literacy and reflective awareness** necessary to recognize, contain, and channel these responses productively within an educational context.

I. Pedagogical Approach

The pedagogical foundation of this Toolbox is **transdisciplinary**, drawing from **ecopsychology, educational psychology, trauma-informed practice, and psychodynamic theory**. This integration acknowledges that learning is both a cognitive and emotional process. When individuals engage with the climate crisis, they often confront deep existential anxieties and identity-level conflicts.

The educator's role is to create a learning environment where these emotions can be acknowledged, processed, and integrated, rather than suppressed or pathologized. In psychoanalytic terms, this entails providing a *holding environment*, a psychological space in which students can confront uncertainty without becoming overwhelmed.

Educators are encouraged to approach each activity with sensitivity to:

- **Projection and denial:** Students may externalize or minimize their emotional responses to avoid distress.
- **Ambivalence:** Feelings of guilt or helplessness may coexist with curiosity and motivation.
- **Group dynamics:** Climate discussions can evoke collective defences, such as irony, detachment, or intellectualization.

Recognizing these phenomena allows educators to respond with empathy rather than resistance, maintaining a constructive group process.

II. Structure and Use of the Toolbox

Each module in the Toolbox includes:

- A **conceptual overview**, offering psychological and pedagogical grounding.
- **Three practical applications**, adaptable to classroom, workshop, or online settings.
- Guidance for reflection and discussion.

Educators are encouraged to:

- Read each module in full before implementation.
- Reflect on their own relationship with the topic (e.g., personal experiences of ecological anxiety or activism).
- Select activities according to the **developmental level, emotional capacity, and disciplinary context** of their learners.
- Use facilitation notes to anticipate emotional reactions and to prepare containment strategies.

III. Creating a Safe and Reflective Learning Space

A central tenet of this approach is the creation of **psychologically safe spaces**. This involves fostering **trust, empathy, and non-judgmental communication**, where emotional expression is permitted but bounded. Educators should establish at the outset:

- Clear ground rules for respectful dialogue and confidentiality.
- A structure that alternates between emotional activation and grounding (e.g., reflective discussion followed by a concrete task).
- Rituals for opening and closing sessions that signal containment and closure.
-

The educator's presence, their tone, emotional availability, and boundaries is key. Self-awareness of countertransference (personal emotional reactions triggered by students' responses) helps maintain a balanced, grounded facilitation style.

IV. Facilitation Techniques

Educators can enhance psychological safety and learning depth by integrating these facilitation techniques:

- **Containment:** Acknowledge emotional intensity when it arises (*“It’s understandable that this feels overwhelming”*) rather than redirecting or minimizing it.
- **Reflective listening:** Mirror participants’ words and affect to demonstrate empathy and understanding.
- **Normalization:** Frame emotions such as sadness, frustration, or guilt as appropriate responses to environmental reality.
- **Symbolization:** Encourage students to express complex emotions through narrative, metaphor, or creative output, transforming affect into thought.
- **Integration:** Guide learners to connect emotional insights with cognitive understanding, action planning, or group collaboration.

V. Cultural and Institutional Adaptation

The Toolbox has been developed for use across diverse European contexts. Educators are invited to adapt its content to their local cultural, institutional, and linguistic settings. Key considerations include:

- **Cultural attitudes toward emotion and authority:** Some groups may resist affective expression; others may readily engage.
- **Institutional structure:** Integrate exercises into existing curricula, seminars, or research projects rather than adding them as external modules.
- **Interdisciplinary dialogue:** Collaborate with colleagues in psychology, education, sustainability, and social sciences to contextualize the activities within broader academic frameworks.

VI. Ethical Considerations and Boundaries

While emotional processing is integral to this work, educators must maintain **clear ethical and professional boundaries**. The classroom is not a psychotherapeutic setting. Educators should:

- Avoid pathologizing or interpreting students’ experiences.
- Refer individuals showing signs of significant distress to appropriate support services.
- Model emotional regulation through transparency and calm authority.

- Uphold confidentiality and consent in any reflective or creative exercises shared within the group.

VII. Conclusion

The RISE UP Toolbox invites educators to engage not only as transmitters of information but as facilitators of transformation, professionals capable of guiding students through the affective terrain of the climate crisis toward awareness, meaning, and purposeful action.

This approach situates climate education at the intersection of **psychology, pedagogy, and ethics**, supporting the emergence of a generation of learners who can face ecological realities with both cognitive clarity and emotional maturity.

Climate Resilience Toolbox Modules

1. Eco-Psychology

Introduction

Eco-psychology examines the reciprocal relationship between humans and the more-than-human world, focusing on how contact with nature, place-attachment, and meaning-making influence mental health, motivation, and sustainable behaviour. Rooted in both psychological theory and ecological philosophy, it recognizes that the ecological crisis is not only environmental but profoundly psychological, reflecting humanity's fragmented relationship with the natural environment.

In higher education settings, students are often exposed to dense climate information while lacking structured opportunities to process their emotional responses. Research indicates that climate change can evoke anxiety, grief, anger, and helplessness emotions that are valid and adaptive, yet, if unacknowledged, can narrow attention, reduce problem-solving capacity, and lead to disengagement (Clayton, 2020; Hickman et al., 2021; Pihkala, 2020). Eco-psychology offers educators evidence-informed strategies to normalize these emotions, support affect regulation, and channel concern into proportionate, values-aligned action.

From a psychoanalytic and humanistic perspective, the environment serves as an extension of the self a holding environment that supports identity and belonging. When the natural world is degraded or threatened, individuals may experience this loss as a form of ecological trauma. Addressing this requires not only cognitive understanding but emotional integration, allowing educators and students to translate distress into reflection, ethical awareness, and purposeful engagement.

In practice, eco-psychology in education encompasses three interlinked dimensions:

1. Emotional and embodied awareness: cultivating recognition and regulation of affect through grounding, sensory attention, and naming emotions.
2. Cognitive framing: reappraising threat information, connecting personal values to feasible choices, and fostering adaptive meaning-making.
3. Relational engagement: strengthening connection to place, peers, and community through nature contact, group reflection, and shared action.

Nature-based micro-experiences, such as brief outdoor walks or sensory pauses, have been shown to improve mood and buffer stress, offering practical, accessible interventions even for non-specialists (Marselle, Warber, & Irvine, 2019). These experiential methods align with transformative sustainability pedagogies that engage *head, hands, and heart*, linking knowledge, practice, and emotion in meaningful learning (Sipos, Battisti, & Grimm, 2008).

Within RISE UP, eco-psychology supports the Adapted GreenComp Framework for Young Adults, which expands the EU GreenComp by emphasizing the emotional, psychological, and relational dimensions of climate learning. This module primarily advances: *Eco-emotional literacy (1.1)*, *Mindful sustainability (1.3)*, *Cognitive resilience (2.2)*, *Resilient adaptability (3.2)*, *Narrative agency (4.1)*, *Collective resilience practices (4.2)*, and *Reflective & self-caring initiative (4.3)* (Bianchi et al., 2022). Collectively, these competences help students move from emotional overwhelm toward grounded agency, self-awareness, and sustained engagement.

The module is written for non-specialist Higher Education educators and aligns with the project's trauma-informed approach to climate education. Activities are concise, low-preparation, and include consent-based facilitation, optional participation, and short regulation exercises. They can be embedded across disciplines to reduce eco-distress, strengthen resilience, and enhance students' capacity for critical thinking and prosocial behavior, without compromising academic rigor.

Ultimately, eco-psychology positions climate education as both a pedagogical and psychological process: one that restores connection between the individual and the living world, supporting emotional regulation, cognitive clarity, and ethical responsibility in the face of ecological uncertainty.

References:

Bianchi, G., Pisiotis, U., & Cabrera Giraldez, M. (2022). **GreenComp: The European sustainability competence framework**. Publications Office of the European Union. (cited in RISE UP Adapted Framework).

Clayton, S. (2020). Climate anxiety: Psychological responses to climate change. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 74, 102263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2020.102263>

Hickman, C., Marks, E., Pihkala, P., Clayton, S., Lewandowski, R. E., Mayall, E., Wray, B., Mellor, C., & Van Susteren, L. (2021). Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about

government responses to climate change: A global survey. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), e863–e873. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00278-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3)

Marselle, M. R., Warber, S. L., & Irvine, K. N. (2019). Growing resilience through interaction with nature: Can group walks in nature buffer the effects of stressful life events on mental health? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(6), 986. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16060986>

Pihkala, P. (2020). Eco-anxiety and environmental education. *Sustainability*, 12(23), 10149. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122310149>

Practical Applications

Letter to Earth

Title of the Activity: Duration:	
Letter to the Earth 25-40 minutes	
Module:	Eco-Psychology
Objectives:	✓ To provide space for emotional expression in relation to ecological challenges. ✓ To process eco-anxiety, grief, or gratitude through reflective writing. ✓ To foster a sense of reciprocity and belonging to the natural world.
Material:	• Pen and paper or digital journal • Optional: Calm background music.

Instructions:	Invite participants to reflect on their feelings toward the Earth considering the climate crisis. Ask them to write a “letter to the Earth,” which may include: - Expressions of gratitude for the natural world. - Acknowledgment of grief or eco-anxiety. - Commitments to action, care, or mindful presence. Allow 15–20 minutes for writing. Optionally, encourage participants to share excerpts in pairs or a group circle.
Evaluation & Reflection:	• What emotions surfaced during the writing? • Did the exercise reduce feelings of helplessness or anxiety? • How did it influence participants’ sense of agency and ecological responsibility?
References:	Wang, H., Safer, D. L., Cosentino, M., Cooper, R., Van Susteren, L., Coren, E., ... & Sutton, S. (2023). Coping with eco-anxiety: An interdisciplinary perspective for collective learning and strategic communication. <i>The journal of climate change and health</i>, 9, 100211. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S266727822300010X Vamvalis, M. (2023). “We’re fighting for our lives”: Centering affective, collective and systemic approaches to climate justice education as a youth mental health imperative. <i>Research in Education</i>, 117(1), 88-112. https://doi.org/10.1177/003452372311600 Scott, B. A., Amel, E. L., & Manning, C. M. (2021). <i>Psychology for sustainability</i>. Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003037835/psychology-sustainability-britain-scott-elise-amel-christie-manning

Nature Futures Photo Walk

Title of the Activity:
Duration:

Nearby Nature Futures Photo Walk (with indoor collage fallback)
approx. 40 min

Module:	Eco-Psychology
Objectives:	✓ Notice and name emotions while engaging with nearby nature (Eco-emotional literacy). ✓ Practice place-based attention that supports calm and care (Mindful sustainability). ✓ Create hopeful, local micro-narratives and choose one doable next step (Narrative agency; Reflective & self-caring initiative).
Material:	• Smartphones/Cameras (or paper/cards + markers for indoor collage). • Sticky notes or caption cards; wall/board space; timer. • Room & Route Setup • Identify a safe 5–8-minute loop on campus (shade if hot, no road crossings). • Mark an indoor wall for the “From ____ to ____” gallery. • Prepare a weather fallback: collage tables with magazines/printed local images. • Accessibility: check step-free route; provide indoor option from the start for anyone who prefers. Guidance to adapt for neurodivergent learners is encouraged (ask preferences; offer non-verbal options).
Instructions:	Welcome, purpose & consent — 2 min <i>Script:</i> “Today we’ll take a short photo walk to notice signs of <i>strain</i> → <i>care</i> in our local place. Sharing is optional. You may pass at any time. We focus on what you notice, not personal stories.” (Trauma-informed framing.) Sensory micro-pause — 3 min (whole group, standing near the door or windows) <i>Script:</i> “Look around and silently list 5 things you see, 4 hear, 3 feel (touch), 2 smell, and 1 thing you appreciate right now.”

	Prompt briefing — 1 min <i>Script (show slide/handout):</i> “In pairs, take 3 photos that symbolize a local shift from strain to care (e.g., shade, water, biodiversity, repair, inclusion). You’ll pick one to caption later.” Photo walk (or indoor collage) — 12 min Send pairs on the route. If indoors: each pair creates 3 quick mini-collages from printed photos/magazines showing strain→care. Facilitator roves, reminding: “<i>Think close-up textures, small details, not just big landscapes.</i>” Pair share & choose — 4 min Each pair shows the other their 3 images/collages and chooses one. Listener summarises in one sentence: “What you seem to value here is ____.” Caption & micro-action — 5 min On a sticky: write the caption “From ____ to ____.” Under it, add one micro-action for this week (specific: when/where/how; ≤10 minutes). Gallery & close — 3 min Post images/collages. Quick group scan. <i>Script:</i> “Notice any patterns of care. Take your micro-action note with you or photo it.”
Evaluation & Reflection:	- Exit slip (back of sticky): “One feeling I noticed; my micro-action; support I might need.” - Optional quick show of hands: “Who feels clearer about one small step?”
References:	CLARITY Consortium. (2024). <i>Activity 4.1.2 – A photograph of the future.</i> (Adapted for Rise Up; CC BY-SA).

Small Steps, Nature Breaks & Grounding

Title of the Activity: Small Steps, Nature Breaks, and Grounding Duration: (10-15 minutes)	
Module:	Eco-Psychology
Objectives:	✓ Help students reduce eco-anxiety by practicing evidence-based strategies: starting small, limiting media overload, and grounding in nature. ✓ Cultivate positive emotions (calm, awe, gratitude) to counterbalance fear and helplessness (Fredrickson, 2001). ✓ Strengthen resilience and a sense of empowerment through small, achievable ecological actions. ✓ Encourage self-regulation by integrating mindful nature-based practices into daily life.
Material:	• Outdoor space (garden, courtyard, park) or, if unavailable, natural objects (plants, stones, shells, leaves) and recordings of nature sounds. • Paper/journals and pens. • Timer/phone for short mindfulness intervals.
Instructions:	Step 1: Introduction Facilitator explains that eco-anxiety is a normal response to climate change, but research suggests that small actions, time outdoors, and grounding practices can reduce distress and improve resilience (Wright & Osterloff, 2023). Step 2: Start Small

	- Students reflect individually on <i>one small, consistent action</i> they could take to support the planet (e.g., carrying a reusable bottle, walking instead of driving short distances, reducing food waste). - Write it down in a journal: <i>"My small step is..."</i> - Pair share: students exchange their small step with a partner and reflect on how it makes them feel empowered. Step 3: Take a Media Break and Get Outside - Facilitator asks students to imagine their typical news/social media habits about climate change. - Invite them outdoors (or use natural objects indoors) for a 5-minute mindful observation exercise: notice the sounds, textures, smells, and colors around them. - Debrief: <i>How did this feel compared to reading/watching climate news?</i> Step 4: Ground in the Present Moment Guide a grounding meditation: - Focus on breathing (inhale/exhale cycles). - Tune into senses: <i>What do you see, hear, smell, feel?</i> - If possible, students remove their shoes and feel their feet on the earth. Journal prompt: <i>"When I feel eco-anxiety, one way I can ground myself is..."</i> Step 5: Closing Students commit to practicing one of these three strategies during the coming week and share it with the group. Facilitator reinforces the message: <i>"You don't need to solve the climate crisis alone. Small steps, nature breaks, and grounding practices build resilience and hope."</i>
Evaluation & Reflection:	Facilitator prompts group reflection: <i>Which of the three strategies felt most helpful for you personally?</i> <i>How might starting small, taking breaks, and grounding yourself change the way you experience eco-anxiety?</i>

	• <i>What positive emotions (calm, hope, gratitude) emerged during the activity?</i> Students are encouraged to track their experiences in a weekly journal.
References:	Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 56(3), 218–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218 Wright, S., & Osterloff, E. (2023, March 6). Eco-anxiety: How to cope at a time of climate crisis. <i>Calm Blog</i>. https://blog.calm.com

2. Crises Management Mechanisms & Behaviour

Introduction

Higher education increasingly recognises that transformative sustainability learning requires more than cognitive knowledge. As Sterling (2010) argues, transformative learning emerges when education is experiential, personally engaging, and reflective. Similarly, Taylor (2007) highlights that students are most deeply affected by learning that combines direct experience with structured opportunities for reflection. For climate education, this means creating learning environments where students not only understand crises intellectually, but also practise coping, decision-making, and leadership in ways that connect to their lived experience.

In the field of crises management, Lalonde and Roux-Dufort (2013) emphasise that effective response depends on three core competencies: calm yet assertive leadership, pragmatic decision-making under severe time and resource constraints, and the ability to coordinate and reorganise systems efficiently. They expand this into fifteen specific leadership capacities, including self-confidence, communication skills, resilience, analytical thinking, team-building, and social competence. These resonate strongly with the needs of young adults navigating climate-related crises. In higher education, however, students often struggle with eco-anxiety, grief, or paralysis when faced with overwhelming information. Research shows that acknowledging these emotions while fostering constructive coping strategies can help sustain engagement and build resilience (Ojala, 2016; Pihkala, 2020).

The tools presented in this module are designed to bring these insights into practice. They provide structured ways for students to rehearse crisis responses, regulate behaviour under stress, and translate concern into constructive action. By combining experiential scenarios, behavioural strategies, and reflective practices, the activities equip students the emotional grounding and the behavioural skills needed for resilience.

References:

Lalonde, C., & Roux-Dufort, C. (2013). Challenges in teaching crisis management: Connecting theories, skills, and reflexivity. *Journal of Management Education*, 37(1), 21-50.

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Taylor, E. (2007) An update of transformative learning theory: a critical review of the empirical research (1999-2005), International Journal of Lifelong Education, vol.26, no.2, pp.173-191.

Practical Applications

Crisis Management Simulation

Title of the Activity: Duration:		Crisis Management Simulation (30 minutes)
Module:	Crises Management Mechanisms & Behaviour	
Objectives:	✓ Practise calm, solution-oriented leadership under uncertainty. ✓ Strengthen teamwork and collective decision-making during climate disruptions. ✓ Build confidence to act despite incomplete information	
Material:	• Printed crisis scenario brief (e.g., extreme heatwave disrupting campus) • Flipcharts or online collaboration boards • Role cards (e.g., student representatives, facilities, council).	
Instructions:	Present a climate disruption scenario with minimal warning. Assign roles to small groups (6–8 participants). Give 15–20 min to: ○ Identify key threats and affected groups.	

	○ Allocate urgent vs. longer-term actions. ○ Communicate clearly under pressure. Each group delivers a 2–3 min briefing to the “university crisis board.” Debrief: <i>What helped keep calm? What caused panic or confusion?</i>
Evaluation & Reflection:	• How did the group regulate stress? • What leadership behaviours worked well under pressure? • What personal skill would you like to develop for future crises? .
References:	Sterling, S. (2010). Transformative learning and sustainability: Sketching the conceptual ground. <i>Learning and teaching in higher education</i>, 5(11), 17-33. Lalonde, C., & Roux-Dufort, C. (2013). Challenges in teaching crisis management: Connecting theories, skills, and reflexivity. <i>Journal of Management Education</i>, 37(1), 21-50.

Crisis Reflection & Resilience Mapping

Title of the Activity: Duration:	Crisis Reflection & Resilience Mapping (30 minutes)
Module:	Crises Management Mechanisms & Behaviour

Objectives:	✓ Practise calm, solution-oriented leadership under uncertainty. ✓ Strengthen teamwork and collective decision-making during climate disruptions. ✓ Build confidence to act despite incomplete information
Material:	• Printed crisis scenario brief (e.g., extreme heatwave disrupting campus) • Flipcharts or online collaboration boards • Role cards (e.g., student representatives, facilities, council).
Instructions:	Present a climate disruption scenario with minimal warning. Assign roles to small groups (6–8 participants). Give 15–20 min to: ○ Identify key threats and affected groups. ○ Allocate urgent vs. longer-term actions. ○ Communicate clearly under pressure. Each group delivers a 2–3 min briefing to the “university crisis board.” Debrief: <i>What helped keep calm? What caused panic or confusion?</i>
Evaluation & Reflection:	• How did the group regulate stress? • What leadership behaviours worked well under pressure? • What personal skill would you like to develop for future crises? .
References:	Sterling, S. (2010). Transformative learning and sustainability: Sketching the conceptual ground. <i>Learning and teaching in higher education</i>, 5(11), 17-33. Lalonde, C., & Roux-Dufort, C. (2013). Challenges in teaching crisis management: Connecting theories, skills, and reflexivity. <i>Journal of Management Education</i>, 37(1), 21-50.

Decision-Making Under Uncertainty

Title of the Activity: Duration:	
Decision-Making Under Uncertainty	
Module:	Crises Management Mechanisms & Behaviour
Objectives	✓ Practise acting under pressure with incomplete or evolving information. ✓ Strengthen calm, rational decision-making in climate-related crises. ✓ Increase awareness of emotional responses and cognitive biases during uncertainty. ✓ Build confidence to lead or collaborate in unpredictable situations.
Material:	• Printed or projected scenario brief (following the format of news flash, e.g. “severe heatwave”, “unexpected flood/tornado”) • Flipcharts / whiteboard for group discussion. • Timer
Instructions:	1. Tell students they will receive breaking news about an emerging climate crisis affecting their campus or community. 2. Scenario reveal (5 min): Present an initial short news flash with partial facts (e.g., “Local authorities warn of possible flood risk next week; details unclear”). Do not give full data yet. 3. Team response: In groups of 4-6, students list immediate actions, key uncertainties, and who they would communicate with. 4. Second update: Give new info (e.g., flood risk now higher; evacuation possible). Teams adjust plans quickly. 5. Debrief and discuss: ○ What emotions came up? ○ How did partial data affect decisions? ○ What leadership behaviours helped?

Evaluation & Reflection:	• How comfortable did you feel deciding with incomplete information? • What emotions surfaced and how did your team handle them? • Which decision-making strategies felt effective? • How could you use these skills in real climate-related challenges at university or in your community?
References:	Pihkala, P. (2020). Eco-anxiety and environmental education. Sustainability, 12(23), 10149.

3. Eco-Grief & Eco-Guilt

Introduction

Eco-grief refers to the sorrow and mourning associated with ecological degradation and climate-related losses (places, species, futures, cultural practices). In higher education, students often receive dense climate information without structured spaces to process these emotions. Research shows climate concerns can manifest as distress, anxiety, and grief that affect wellbeing and learning; different emotions (e.g., anger vs. sadness) also relate differently to action and policy support (Searle & Gow, 2010; Stanley, Hogg, Leviston, & Walker, 2021; Wang, Leviston, Hurlstone, Lawrence, & Walker, 2018; Hickman et al., 2021). This module translates evidence-informed approaches into short, trauma-informed practices that help learners name and normalise grief, regulate arousal, and move toward meaning and proportionate care in their context.

How it fits the RISE UP approach

The Adapted GreenComp Framework for Young Adults enriches EU GreenComp by foregrounding the emotional, psychological, and relational dimensions of climate learning for HE. Eco-grief connects especially to: *1.1 Eco-emotional literacy, 1.2 Trauma-informed climate justice, 2.2 Cognitive resilience, 2.3 Transformative framing, 3.2 Resilient adaptability, 4.1 Narrative agency, 4.2 Collective resilience practices, and 4.3 Reflective & self-caring initiative*. Activities in this module explicitly build these competences through peer dialogue, meaning-making, and gentle, practice-oriented steps.

What learners will practise

- **Emotion naming & regulation:** acknowledging loss while stabilising attention (brief grounding, paced sharing).
- **Meaning-making:** identifying values at stake and what endures, then translating that into caring practices.
- **Peer support & collective care:** simple formats (triads, small groups) that emphasise listening, consent, and privacy.
- These will support to reduce eco-distress and strengthen resilience in university settings.

Trauma-informed facilitation (non-negotiables)

- **Consent & opt-outs:** participation is voluntary; “pass” and step-out/return are always available.
- **Psychological safety:** no graphic content; focus on *experience* rather than personal disclosure; do not harvest personal stories.

- **Regulation before reflection, and at close:** brief grounding to open and close; signpost campus supports.
- **Accessibility & inclusion:** offer lower-intensity options (e.g., back-to-back seating, walk-and-talk), visual prompts, predictable timing.

How to use the activities

This module provides two short, stackable, non-specialist practices:

1. **Grief Circles — Name · Normalize · Nurture** (guided deep-listening in triads with consent language and grounding), adapted from CLARITY/Legacy17 deep-listening methods.
2. **Loss Map → Meaning Map** (individual mapping of losses → values/continuity → one tiny care practice for 1–2 weeks).

Both use minimal materials, fit standard classrooms, and include built-in reflection without grading emotions.

Assessment & reflection

Keep assessment low-stakes and formative: exit slips, brief scales (calm/clarity/do-ability), and anonymous process notes. Educators may aggregate indicators (e.g., % of students identifying a realistic care step) for course QA never collect personal grief content.

Time & sequencing suggestions

- Open a climate-intensive block with **Grief Circles** (35–45 min) to acknowledge feelings safely.
- Follow with **Loss Map → Meaning Map** (35–45 min) to re-anchor values and design a tiny, shared practice.
- Pair later with **Positive Psychology** or **Climate Narratives** modules for efficacy/hope and storytelling.

Evidence base & provenance

The rationale draws on the project literature (e.g., links between climate emotions, action, and wellbeing) and open educational resources developed by the Clarity Project - adapted under CC BY-SA. The Adapted Framework integrates bereavement research and eco-emotions literature to support HE contexts (e.g., Dual Process Model; eco-anxiety/eco-grief reviews).

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Practical Applications

Grief Circles: Name – Normalize – Nurture

Title of the Activity: Duration:	Name – Normalize – Nurture 40 minutes
Module:	Eco-Grief & Eco-Guilt
Objectives	✓ Name and normalize climate-related grief safely (Eco-emotional literacy; Trauma-informed climate justice). ✓ Practice deep listening and peer care (Collective resilience practices). ✓ Close with a self-care/peer-care step to sustain engagement (Reflective & self-caring initiative; Resilient adaptability).
Material:	• Timer/phone; printed prompt cards; optional “Care Menu” (campus support & peer-check options). • Chairs for triads (speaker–listener–observer). Room & Route Setup • Quiet room; form circles of three. Optional outdoor benches if calm/accessible. • Accessibility: allow back-to-back seating or short “walk-and-talk” for lower intensity and sensory comfort.
Instructions:	1. Welcome & consent (4 min) Script: “Eco-grief—sadness about ecological loss—is a valid response. This session is optional; you may pass or step out and return. We attend to experience, not personal details.” 2. State confidentiality expectation; remind that sharing specifics is optional.

	3. Introduce deep-listening roles (3 min) 4. Explain speaker (3 min), listener (reflect one word/short phrase; no advice), observer (notice supportive cues; share neutrally). Rotate each round. 5. Round A: Naming Loss (12 min) Prompt cards (choose one): - “Something I miss, or fear losing, in our local environment is ...” - “A change I mourn, even if small, is ...” Run 3-minute turns per person; 1 minute for observer notes; rotate (x3). 6. Round B: What Helps (12 min) New prompt: “When grief shows up, something that helps me cope or feel connected is ...” Same timing and rotation. Remind listeners to mirror one word; observers share neutral observations. 7. Meaning & micro-care (5–7 min) Individual jot: “What do I want to honour or protect?” → choose one care step for this week (self-care, peer-care, or place-care; ≤10 minutes). Pair briefly to state the step aloud. 8. Closing & supports (2 min) 60-second grounding (feet on floor; long exhale). Share “Care Menu” and campus contacts.
Evaluation & Reflection:	- Anonymous slip: “This felt (supportive/challenging); next time I’d need ...” - Quick 0–5: felt heard? have a care step? - Safety, inclusion & adaptations: - Encourage pass/step-out; never harvest personal content to plenary. - Offer back-to-back seating or outdoor walk variant; adapt for neurodivergence (clear visuals; predictable timing).
References:	Legacy17. (2024). Deep listening with others (Activity 3.3.2). In CLARITY Project Resource (CC BY-SA). (Adapted for Rise Up.)

	Legacy17. (2024). Deep listening to oneself (Activity 3.3.3). In CLARITY Project Resource (CC BY-SA). (Context; adapted elements.) Searle, K., & Gow, K. (2010). Do concerns about climate change lead to distress? International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management, 2(4), 362–379. https://doi.org/10.1108/17568691011089891. (Background rationale.)
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Loss Map → Meaning Map

Title of the Activity: Duration:	
Loss Map → Meaning Map 35-45 minutes	
Module:	Eco-Grief & Eco-Guilt
Objectives	✓ Externalise and visualise losses to reduce overwhelm (Eco-emotional literacy). ✓ Reframe toward values and continuity (Cognitive resilience; Transformative framing). ✓ Design one tiny, shared care practice (Collective resilience practices; Resilient adaptability; Reflective & self-caring initiative).
Material:	• A3 sheets ×2 per person, markers, sticky dots (intensity), masking tape; timer Room & Route Setup • Tables for small groups; clear wall space for posting. • Accessibility: offer icon/doodle option; allow writing or non-verbal mapping; predictable timing

Instructions:	1. Consent & framing (3 min) Script: “Eco-grief is welcome here. Share only what feels safe. You may pass or step out and return. We’ll map experiences without collecting personal stories.” 2.Loss Map (individual) (10 min) Title page “Loss Map.” Prompt on slide: - “Places/species/times I grieve ...” (words or icons) - Add sticky dots for intensity (optional). Quiet work: educator circulates to keep tone gentle. 3.Witness in pairs (6 min) A speaks 2-3 min; B reflects one word/phrase they heard (no fixing/advice). Switch. 4.Meaning Map (individual) (10 min) New sheet “Meaning Map” with three columns: Value at stake What endures What I can nurture now. Choose 1–2 items from Loss Map; complete the three columns. 5. From meaning to practice (small groups) (10–12 min) As a group, propose one tiny ritual/practice to pilot for 1–2 weeks (e.g., weekly 2-min “tree-notice” pause; refill/bird-bath duty; quiet “gratitude for place” before class). 6.Decide who/when/where; capture on a card; volunteer to bring materials if needed. 7.Close & supports (2–3 min) 60-second grounding; thank each other; post optional Meaning Map excerpts (values/practices only).
Evaluation & Reflection:	- Exit slip: “One value I want to honour is ...; our tiny practice is ... (when/where).” 0–5 scale: clarity and do-ability. Safety, inclusion & adaptations: - Keep shares optional; do not harvest personal narrative in plenary; focus on values/practices.

	Offer visual alternatives (icons, colour dots); consider back-to-back pair option for lower intensity.
References:	Stanley, S. K., Hogg, T. L., Leviston, Z., & Walker, I. (2021). From anger to action: Differential impacts of eco-anxiety, eco-depression, and eco-anger on climate action and wellbeing. <i>The Journal of Climate Change and Health</i>, 1, 100003. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joclim.2021.100003. (Background on emotions & action.) Wang, S., Leviston, Z., Hurlstone, M., Lawrence, C., & Walker, I. (2018). Emotions predict policy support: Why it matters how people feel about climate change. <i>Global Environmental Change</i>, 50, 25–40. (Background link between emotion & policy support.)

Thought Record Lite – Guilt

Title of the Activity: Duration:	Thought Record Lite – Guilt → Responsibility → Choice 25-35 minutes
Module:	Eco-Grief & Eco-Guilt
Objectives	✓ Differentiate guilt vs. shame and reduce self-attack (Eco-emotional literacy; Trauma-informed climate justice). ✓ Practise a cognitive reframe and choose a proportionate option (Cognitive resilience; Resilient adaptability). ✓ Commit to a next step that respects limits and care (Reflective & self-caring initiative).
Material:	1-page Thought Record Lite template (Situation → Automatic thought → Feeling (0–10) → Evidence for/against → Balanced thought → Choice point), - pens

	- timer Room & Route Setup - Standard classroom; pairs optional.
Instructions:	1. Consent & framing (2 min) Script: “Today we’ll use a simple thinking tool to move from guilt to a realistic choice. Participation is voluntary; keep details private.” 2. Psycho-education (3 min) Script: “Guilt says ‘I did something wrong’; shame says, ‘I am wrong’. Our aim is responsibility with choice, not self-attack.” (Name structural limits/injustices briefly.) 3.Fill the record (10 min) Learners complete: Situation (just facts) → Automatic thought (e.g., “I’m a hypocrite”) → Feeling (0–10) → Evidence for/against → Balanced alternative thought. Educator circulates; offer examples of common thinking patterns (all-or-nothing, over-responsibility, comparisons). 4.Choice Point (individual) (7-10 min) Menu: choose one proportionate option - <i>Repair</i> (fix/offset a manageable part), <i>Reduce</i> (one habit change), <i>Advocate</i> (one message/ask), or <i>Rest</i> (planned recovery to sustain action). Write first small step + barrier/backup plan (If X, then Y). 5.Close & supports (1 min) 30-second breath reset; signpost campus supports.
Evaluation & Reflection:	- Exit slip: “One value I want to honour is ...; our tiny practice is ... (when/where).” 0–5 scale: clarity and do-ability. Safety, inclusion & adaptations: - Keep content private; no forced disclosure; encourage step-out/return.

	• Provide visual template; allow write-only mode; avoid moralising.
References:	Legacy17. (2024). Deep listening with others (Activity 3.3.2). In CLARITY Project Resource (CC BY-SA). (Adapted for Rise Up.) Legacy17. (2024). Deep listening to oneself (Activity 3.3.3). In CLARITY Project Resource (CC BY-SA). (Context; adapted elements.) Searle, K., & Gow, K. (2010). Do concerns about climate change lead to distress? <i>International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management</i>, 2(4), 362–379. https://doi.org/10.1108/17568691011089891 . (Background rationale.)

4. Positive Psychology

Introduction

Positive psychology is the scientific study of human strengths, well-being, and the conditions that enable individuals and communities to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Unlike traditional psychology, which has often centred on pathology, positive psychology emphasizes the cultivation of well-being, resilience, and constructive coping (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). This shift is particularly relevant in the context of higher education, where educators increasingly face the responsibility of supporting students navigating complex challenges such as climate change, ecological uncertainty, and the rising prevalence of eco-anxiety (Pihkala, 2020).

Positive psychology operates across three levels of analysis: the subjective (positive emotions, meaning, flow), the individual (virtues such as creativity, courage, and wisdom), and the group (altruism, social responsibility, and community resilience) (Boniwell, 2012; Seligman, 2002). Each level offers educators valuable insights for cultivating supportive learning environments. For example, fostering positive emotions broadens students' cognitive flexibility, encourages adaptive coping, and builds long-term psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001, 2004). This is particularly important in addressing eco-anxiety, where worry and despair can narrow attention and reduce problem-solving capacity. By cultivating emotions such as hope, gratitude, and inspiration, educators can help students counterbalance the psychological burden of environmental concerns (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Fredrickson et al., 2008).

In addition, positive psychology emphasizes the value of growth mindsets (Dweck, 2006), gratitude practices (Froh, Bono, & Emmons, 2010), and positive social connections (Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2015), each of which can be applied within higher education. A growth mindset helps students approach ecological challenges as opportunities for learning and innovation rather than insurmountable threats. Gratitude interventions can foster resilience and appreciation for ecological systems, while supportive peer and educator relationships strengthen students' sense of belonging and reduce distress. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model: highlighting Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, provides a comprehensive framework for embedding well-being practices into educational contexts, aligning with sustainability goals and ecological citizenship.

Recent research reinforces these applications. Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) have been shown to improve resilience, optimism, and well-being across diverse populations, including students and professionals (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Martínez-Martínez et al., 2025). Longitudinal findings suggest that ACT-based and gratitude-focused interventions can yield lasting reductions in anxiety and depression while enhancing optimism and self-compassion (Arslan, Aydoğdu, & Uzun, 2025). Importantly, existential positive psychology (Wong et al., 2023) integrates suffering and meaning-making, offering a valuable perspective for addressing eco-anxiety by framing environmental crises as catalysts for personal growth, collective action, and deeper engagement with values.

For the RISE UP project, which seeks to cultivate tools and practices for higher education educators, positive psychology provides both a theoretical foundation and practical interventions. By equipping educators with strategies to foster positivity, growth, and resilience, higher education can empower students to navigate ecological anxiety with creativity, agency, and hope. In this way, positive psychology not only enhances individual well-being but also supports the development of resilient communities capable of meeting ecological challenges with strength and vision.

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Practical Applications

3 Good Things

Title of the Activity: Duration:		3 Good Things (10-15 minutes)
Module:	Positive Psychology	

Objectives:	✓ To cultivate gratitude and increase awareness of positive experiences. ✓ To promote emotional resilience and well-being. ✓ To shift focus from negative to positive daily experiences. ✓ To enhance reflective thinking and mood over time.
Material:	• Pen and paper or digital journal • Optional: Calm background music, printed prompts or a facilitator's guide
Instructions:	1. Invite participants to take a few quiet moments to reflect on their day. 2. Ask them to write down three things that went well today, big or small. 3. For each "good thing," they should answer: ➤ What happened? ➤ Why did it go well? ➤ What did I or someone else do to contribute to it? 4. Encourage them to do this every evening for one week (or more). 5. Optionally, facilitate a short group sharing or discussion on the emotional impact.
Evaluation & Reflection:	At the end of the week, ask participants: • Did they notice any changes in mood, sleep, or optimism? • Was it easy or hard to find good things? Why? • Would they continue this practice? Encourage journaling or group reflection to reinforce the benefits.
References:	Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 60(5), 410–421. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410

Exploring and Applying VIA Character Strengths

Title of the Activity: Exploring and Applying VIA Character Strengths Duration: (45 minutes)	
Module:	Positive Psychology
Objectives:	✓ Enhance students' self-awareness by identifying their top five "signature strengths." ✓ Develop a strengths-based vocabulary to describe personal qualities in academic, social, and professional contexts. ✓ Encourage the application of signature strengths in daily life, career planning, and future employability. ✓ Foster a sense of purpose, agency, and resilience by highlighting how character strengths can support coping with challenges such as eco-anxiety and academic stress.
Material:	• Access to the VIA Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) for adults (18+) or the VIA Youth for ages 10–17, available online at no cost: www.viacharacter.org • Handouts or slides with the VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths (for participants without online access or English fluency). • Writing materials (paper, pens, or digital devices).
Instructions:	Step 1: Introduction The facilitator introduces the concept of character strengths as positive traits expressed through thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Explain that each individual typically has five "signature strengths" that are deeply authentic and fulfilling to use.

	Step 2: Assessment - Students complete the VIA-IS or VIA Youth survey online. - If online access or English is a barrier, provide the VIA Classification handout and ask students to select the five strengths they believe represent them most. Step 3: Reflection Students review their top five strengths and reflect on prompts such as: <i>Do these results describe how you see yourself?</i> <i>Which strengths surprise you? Which feel most authentic?</i> <i>How have you used these strengths in the past week?</i> Step 4: Application Students choose one or two signature strengths and brainstorm ways to apply them in: Daily life (e.g., using kindness in relationships, creativity in problem-solving). Career planning (e.g., applying perseverance in job searching, teamwork in interviews). Managing challenges such as academic stress or eco-anxiety (e.g., using hope to stay motivated, perspective to reframe difficulties). Step 5: Sharing In pairs or small groups, students share one strength and one way they plan to use it in the coming week.
Evaluation & Reflection:	Facilitator leads a short group discussion on how recognizing and applying signature strengths can increase confidence, motivation, and adaptability. Students are encouraged to set a weekly goal to consciously use one strength and reflect on it in a journal entry. Expected skills: honesty, creativity, responsibility, resilience.

	Facilitator emphasizes that signature strengths are practical tools for both personal growth and employability.
References:	Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). <i>Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification</i>. Oxford University Press. VIA Institute on Character. (n.d.). <i>Know and celebrate the real you</i>. Retrieved from https://www.viacharacter.org VIA Institute on Character. (n.d.). <i>Character strengths fact sheets</i>. Retrieved from https://www.viacharacter.org/reports-courses-resources/resources/character-strength-fact-sheets

Eco-Resilience Letters to the Future

Title of the Activity:	Eco-Resilience Letters to the Future
Duration:	(45 minutes)
Module:	Positive Psychology

Objectives:	✓ Cultivate hope and optimism, two central positive psychology constructs, as buffers against eco-anxiety. ✓ Strengthen meaning making by inviting students to connect their current actions and emotions with a long-term ecological vision. ✓ Enhance emotional resilience through positive reappraisal and future-oriented reflection. ✓ Foster collective responsibility and empathy by sharing ecological hopes within a group.
Material:	• Paper and pens (or digital writing tools). • Envelopes (optional, for sealing letters).
Instructions:	Step 1: Introduction Facilitator introduces the role of hope and meaning in positive psychology (Seligman, 2011; Wong et al., 2023), explaining that connecting to the future can reduce eco-anxiety and enhance resilience. Step 2: Individual Writing Students write a “Letter to the Future” addressed to: • their future selves, • their future children or community, or • future generations in general. Prompts: • <i>What kind of world do you hope exists in 20 years?</i> • <i>Which strengths, values, and actions can you (and others) use to help create that world?</i>

	• <i>What positive emotions do you want people to feel about the environment (e.g., awe, gratitude, pride)?</i> Step 3: Pair/Small Group Sharing Students voluntarily share key themes or sentences from their letters with a peer or in a small group. Encourage active listening and mutual support. Step 4: Collective Visioning Groups summarize their main hopes into 2–3 “future visions” and share them with the class. Facilitator records these on the board to create a collective eco-resilience vision. Step 5: Closing Students seal their letters (if desired) to revisit later or keep them in their journals as reminders of their strengths and hopes.
Evaluation & Reflection:	• <i>How did writing this letter affect the way you feel about ecological challenges?</i> • <i>What strengths or values stood out as important for creating resilience?</i> • <i>Do you feel more hopeful or empowered after articulating your vision?</i> Facilitator emphasizes that hope, meaning, and future orientation are protective psychological resources that can turn eco-anxiety into motivation for action.
References:	Pihkala, P. (2020). Eco-anxiety and environmental education. <i>Sustainability</i>, 12(23), 10149. https://doi.org/10.3390/su122310149 Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). <i>Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being</i>. Free Press. Wong, P. T. P., Mayer, C.-H., & Arslan, G. (2023). Existential positive psychology (PP 2.0): A new science of flourishing

	through suffering. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> , 14, 1280613. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1280613
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5. Creative Action & Therapeutic Arts

Introduction

In a time of ecological upheaval and rising climate distress, young people are not only seeking knowledge - they are seeking meaning, connection, and ways to emotionally navigate an uncertain future. This module explores how creative and therapeutic arts can become powerful tools for climate resilience, enabling both expression and transformation.

Drawing on the rich intersections between psychology, the arts, and environmental education, this module introduces creative action as a participatory, expressive, and healing response to the climate crisis. Through visual arts, movement, drama, poetry, and other embodied practices, young people can engage with climate-related emotions in ways that foster agency, empathy, and collective imagination.

Rather than approaching climate education solely through cognitive or scientific frameworks, therapeutic arts open space for feeling, sensing, and reimagining. These practices help surface complex emotional responses - grief, anxiety, anger, hope - and turn them into creative energy and meaningful engagement. Rooted in a trauma-informed perspective, this approach honours the emotional realities of climate change while empowering individuals to act with resilience and care.

Art, in its many forms, enables connection - to self, to others, and to the natural world. It supports healing, cultivates emotional literacy, and invites us to envision alternative futures. As such, this module positions the arts not as an "extra" in climate education, but as a vital language through which young people can process, respond, and contribute to transformative change.

The following examples offer practical ways to engage young people in creative, therapeutic arts processes that support emotional resilience and climate engagement. Each activity invites expression, connection, and reflection. The first activity, ***Climate Emotions Collage***, invites participants to explore and express their feelings about the climate crisis through visual storytelling. Using accessible materials and intuitive creation, this process supports emotional insight, connection, and a sense of agency through shared artistic reflection.

The second activity, ***Turn Stress into an Art Action***, channels climate-related stress into collective creativity, inviting participants to raise awareness and foster community resilience through socially engaged art. By transforming concern into public expression, this process empowers young people to take visible, meaningful action in their immediate environment.

The third activity, ***Climate Change Theatre: Voices of Emotions***, offers a dynamic space for exploring emotional responses through movement, storytelling, and collaborative performance. Engaging with multiple viewpoints, this theatrical process builds empathy, emotional insight, and a sense of shared agency in the face of ecological uncertainty.

Practical Applications

Climate Emotions Collage

Title of the Activity: Climate Emotions Collage Duration: (30-60 minutes)	
Module:	Creative Action / Therapeutic Arts
Objectives:	✓ To help participants identify, explore, and express their emotional responses to the climate crisis through visual metaphor and non-verbal expression. ✓ To foster emotional processing and psychological resilience using arts-based, trauma-informed approaches. ✓ To encourage dialogue, reflection, and peer connection through shared creative expression.
Material:	• Old magazines and newspapers • Scissors, glue stick • A3 or A4 paper (preferably thicker paper or cardboard) • Colored pencils, crayons, or markers. • Optional: natural materials (leaves, bark, flowers), fabrics, printed images, textured paper.
Instructions:	1. Set the context: Begin with a short introduction or guided discussion about the emotional impact of climate change. Mention common feelings such as anxiety, grief, anger, helplessness, but also hope, motivation, or love for

	nature. Emphasize that all emotions are valid and meaningful. 2. Create the collage: Ask participants to create a collage that visually represents their emotional experience related to climate change. Encourage them to work intuitively - selecting images, textures, or words that resonate. They may create a symbolic landscape, abstract composition, or anything that feels authentic. Offer optional prompts, such as: - What does your “climate feeling” world look like? - If your emotions had shapes, textures, or colors - what would they be? 3. Share and reflect: Invite participants to (voluntarily) share their collage in pairs or small groups. Guide them with reflection questions: - What emotions did you explore or discover through this process? - What was challenging or surprising? - How might expressing these emotions help in facing the climate crisis?
Evaluation & Reflection:	Self-reflection questions (individual or written): • What did this process reveal about how I feel in relation to climate change? • How did I experience using art to explore emotions, compared to using words? Facilitator’s observation criteria: • Participant engagement and openness in the creative process • Willingness to share and listen in reflective discussions • Emotional awareness and use of symbolic/creative language Optional group debrief questions: • What patterns or themes emerged across different collages? • How can we integrate creativity and emotional honesty into climate-related conversations or actions?
References:	

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Turn Stress Into An Art Action

Title of the Activity: Turn stress into an art action Duration: (90-120 minutes)	
Module:	Creative Action / Therapeutic Arts
Objectives:	✓ Use art and artistic expression to engage the immediate community in environmental issues ✓ To help participants identify areas related to climate change that cause them concern ✓ To help participants find solutions to reduce stress by an artistic social campaign or art performance ✓ To strengthen cooperation in the immediate environment ✓ To increase awareness of real threats and possibilities of counteracting them
Material:	• Tablet, laptop with Internet access • Access to databases of scientific papers (optional) • A3 or larger sheet and colour markers
Instructions:	The activity can be completed individually or in groups. The facilitator should begin by explaining what climate change-related stress is and provide concrete examples (e.g., floods, droughts, heat waves, biodiversity loss). Steps: 1. Identify concerns – Participants create a list of events/changes/concerns related to climate change that they find stressful or important for their local environment.

	2. Prioritise – From the list, participants select one issue they consider especially relevant and urgent. 3. Research phase – Each group or individual searches for scientific publications and, if possible, critical studies describing the chosen problem, its local or global impact, and potential consequences if no action is taken. 4. Artistic expression – Instead of a traditional presentation, participants prepare an artistic form of communication that raises awareness of the problem in their immediate environment. This may be: - a flyer, poster or billboard project, - a visual installation (drawing, painting, collage, digital design). The work should illustrate why the chosen issue is stressful, what risks it poses for the future, and what can be done to minimise its effects. To reduce paper consumption, it can be suggested to use tools like Canva to create artistic expression 5. Solutions and empowerment – Each artistic work must also propose real ideas/solutions: changes in habits, individual and collective actions, or policy recommendations that can reduce both the effects of the problem and the stress it generates. 6. Presentation and discussion – Groups present their artworks to the others. A question-and-answer session and collective discussion follow, allowing participants to reflect on emotions, solutions, and the power of art in climate awareness.
Evaluation & Reflection:	S Questions for participants - Did the task contribute to a deeper understanding of the situations causing stress related to climate change? - To what extent has researching and analysing scientific data helped me understand climate change? - Has sharing my concerns with others helped reduce my stress levels? - Does searching for solutions to a given problem help reduce the stress associated with that problem? - Will you be using some of the ideas presented in class?

	Facilitator's evaluation criteria - Openness to sharing with the group - Creativity in searching for solutions and artistic expression - Feasibility of applying solutions in reality - Participation in discussion - Ability to ask questions critically
References:	McLaughlin, H., & Seabrook, D. (2025). The creative arts therapies and the climate crisis: Toward a framework for intentional engagement. <i>Arts in Psychotherapy</i>, 92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2025.102255 Heginworth, I. S., & Nash, G. (Eds.). (2019). <i>Environmental arts therapy: The wild frontiers of the heart</i>. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429437649

Climate Change Theatre: Voices of Emotion

Title of the Activity: Climate Change Theatre: Voices of Emotions Duration: (50-70 minutes)	
Module:	Creative Action / Therapeutic Arts
Objectives:	✓ To provide participants with a safe space to externalize and explore emotions linked to climate change (e.g., fear, anger, grief, hope). ✓ To build empathy and resilience by adopting multiple perspectives (individual, community, nature, future generations). ✓ To strengthen collective coping strategies through dialogue, role-play, and creative problem-solving.
Material:	• Open space for movement and role-play • Chairs or simple props (optional) • Paper and pens (for preparing roles and dialogues) • Optional: calming background music for warm-up / debriefing

Instructions:	1. Introduction: Facilitate a short group discussion about the emotions that climate change provokes. Write keywords on a flipchart (e.g., anger, anxiety, sadness, determination, love for nature). 2. Role-play Preparation: Divide participants into small groups (3–5 people). Each group should prepare a short scenario related to climate change, for example: <i>A community facing extreme weather events.</i> <i>A conversation between young people about their future.</i> <i>A debate between “the voice of nature” and “the voice of industry.”</i> <i>A meeting of future generations asking the present generation for action.</i> Encourage groups to brainstorm emotions, conflicts, and possible dialogues. 3. Performance: Each group presents a short scene (2–5 minutes). Emphasize that there are no “wrong” performances – the goal is expression, not perfection. 4. Share and discuss: After each scene, the audience shares what emotions and messages they perceived. How did it feel to embody a role? Did playing a character change how the participants relate to climate issues? What new perspectives or coping strategies emerged? How can drama help us face the emotional weight of climate change in real life?
Evaluation & Reflection:	Self - reflection: What role or perspective felt most meaningful to me? Did I discover new ways of thinking about climate-related stress? How can collective storytelling help reduce eco-anxiety? Facilitator observation criteria: Level of engagement in role-play. Ability to express and recognize diverse emotions.

	Evidence of empathy, perspective-taking, and resilience in group reflections.
References:	Nicholson, H. (2014). <i>Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre</i>. Palgrave Macmillan. Ojala, M. (2011). Hope and climate change: the importance of hope for environmental engagement among young people. <i>Environmental Education Research</i>, 18(5), 625–642. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2011.637157

6. Mindfulness & Sustainable Living

Introduction

Mindfulness and sustainable living converge as complementary approaches for addressing today's environmental challenges while also promoting personal well-being among university students. Mindfulness-based interventions for sustainability provide an innovative pedagogical approach, integrating contemplative practices with environmental education to nurture both inner transformation and ecological awareness (Wamsler et al., 2018; Barrett et al., 2016).

The intersection of mindfulness and sustainability recognizes that environmental issues often result from patterns of overconsumption, disconnection from nature, and habitual unconscious behaviour's (Barrett et al., 2016; Garg et al., 2024). Mindfulness practice enhances present-moment awareness, allowing students to examine their consumption patterns, build deeper connections with the natural world, and make more conscious, values-aligned choices about their lifestyle and environmental impact (Stanszus et al., 2017; Iniesta-Bonillo et al., 2025; Wamsler et al., 2018).

Research shows that mindfulness training can influence sustainable behaviours through multiple pathways: increasing awareness of consumption habits, strengthening bonds with nature, enhancing values-based decision-making, and promoting self-regulation for long-term behavioural change (Schuman-Olivier et al., 2020; Wapner, 2016; Le Houcq Corbi et al., 2024). Even brief interventions help students become more attuned to their environmental choices and develop greater motivation for sustainable action (Domingues et al., 2020).

This module integrates contemplative practices specifically tailored to sustainability education, offering experiential learning opportunities that foster both ecological consciousness and personal resilience (Domingues et al., 2020; Wamsler et al., 2018). The pedagogical framework draws from evidence-based mindfulness interventions, incorporating sustainability-specific content and creating transformative learning experiences that address both individual well-being and collective environmental responsibility (Wapner, 2016; Stanszus et al., 2017).

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Stanszus, L., Fischer, D., Böhme, T., Frank, P., Fritzsche, J., Geiger, S., ... & Schrader, U. (2017). Education for sustainable consumption through mindfulness training: Development of a consumption-specific intervention. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 19(1), 5-21.

Wamsler, C., Brossmann, J., Hendersson, H., Kristjansdottir, R., McDonald, C., & Scarampi, P. (2018). Mindfulness in sustainability science, practice, and teaching. *Sustainability Science*, 13(1), 143-162.

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Practical Applications

Mindful Consumption Diary

Title of the Activity: Duration:	Mindful Consumption Diary (1 week assignment + 30–40 min reflection session)
Module:	Mindfulness & Sustainable Living
Objectives	✓ Increase awareness of daily consumption habits and their emotional drivers. ✓ Connect mindfulness practice with sustainability values. ✓ Support students in recognising automatic vs. intentional behaviours. ✓ Build capacity for aligning everyday choices with climate resilience.
Material:	• Diary template (digital or paper). • Pen or journaling app. • Classroom/online platform for reflection discussion.
Instructions:	1. Introduce the exercise: Explain that many behaviours (diet, transport, energy use) are habitual and often emotionally charged. Invite students to become observers of their own choices. 2. Daily entries (individual, 7 days): Each day, record at least one consumption choice (e.g., what I ate, how I travelled, how I used energy). For each, answer: - <i>What did I consume/do?</i> - <i>How did I feel before, during, and after?</i> - <i>Was this aligned with my sustainability values?</i> 3. End-of-week reflection: Ask students to review their diary, identifying patterns (automatic vs. mindful behaviours, emotional triggers).

	4. Class session (30–40 min): In small groups, students share insights. Facilitate discussion on: - <i>What patterns were surprising?</i> - <i>How did emotions shape choices?</i> - <i>What mindful alternatives could be tried in the future?</i>
Evaluation & Reflection:	• Did tracking consumption change how you felt about your choices? • Which behaviours felt most aligned or misaligned with your values? • How might mindfulness help you sustain pro-environmental behaviours under stress? • What small shift will you commit to testing next week?
References:	Pihkala, P. (2020). Eco-anxiety and environmental education. <i>Sustainability</i>, 12(23), 10149. https://doi.org/10.3390/su122310149 Biswas, R. (2022). Ecopsychology – An introspection. In N. Mitra & S. Pal (Eds.), <i>Environmental Management</i>

Closet Confession Challenge

Title of the Activity: Duration:	Closet Confession Challenge: From Awareness to Action Lecture (20–30 min) + Individual Challenge (3–4 days) + Exchange/Donation Day (1.5–2 hours)
Module:	Mindfulness & Sustainable Living
Objectives	✓ Raise awareness of the environmental and social impacts of fashion. ✓ Explore emotional and habitual drivers of clothing consumption. ✓ Encourage mindful reflection on personal clothing habits prior to taking sustainable action. ✓ Support alignment of personal values with sustainable fashion practices.

	✓ Facilitate active behavior change through donation, repair, or clothing exchange.
Material:	• Lecture slides on fashion and climate (carbon footprint, water usage, waste, fast fashion impacts). • Closet Confession reflection template (digital or paper). • Space for clothing exchange / donation setup. • Donation boxes and tables for clothing display.
Instructions:	Lecture: Fashion & Climate Impact (20–30 min) Present key facts on the fashion industry’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, pollution, and waste. Highlight both global trends and local examples where relevant. Encourage students to think critically: How do individual choices connect to larger environmental outcomes? Closet Confession Challenge (3–4 days) Students reflect individually on their wardrobes before the exchange/donation day. For each item they consider: What is this item (brand, material, purchase context)? How often do I wear it? Why or why not? How do I feel about it (attachment, guilt, joy)? Is keeping this item aligned with my sustainability values? Could it be donated, exchanged, or repaired? Tip: Students can take photos, make notes, or use a digital template. Exchange / Donation Day (1.5–2 hours) Students bring items they are willing to donate or exchange. Setup tables for clothing display or a swap area. Small group reflection prompts during the exchange: Which items were hardest to let go of, and why?

	Did the reflection challenge influence the items you decided to bring? How do these small actions contribute to sustainable fashion? Encourage students to take a pledge: one mindful fashion habit to practice over the next month (e.g., repair, second-hand shopping, or capsule wardrobe).
Evaluation & Reflection:	• How did the challenge change your awareness of your clothing habits? • Which emotions influenced your decisions to keep, donate, or exchange items? • Did you notice any patterns between your values and your wardrobe? • Which small action will you commit to next to continue mindful and sustainable fashion habits?
References:	Varma, I. (2019). <i>Mindful Consumption – A Path Towards Fashion Detox</i>. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research. Johansson, V. (2023). <i>The Role of Moral Emotions in Sustainable and Conscious Consumption in Fashion</i>. Umeå University. Hong, Y., Al Mamun, A., Yang, Q., & Masukujjaman, M. (2024). <i>Predicting Sustainable Fashion Consumption Intentions and Practices</i>. <i>Scientific Reports</i>, 14.

Climate Narrative Lab

Title of the Activity: Duration:	Climate narrative Lab: building emotional resilience through storytelling (Introductory workshop (20-25 min) + Individual writing (45-60 min) + Story circle (60 min) + Final reflection (20 min))
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Module:	Mindfulness & Sustainable Living
Objectives	✓ Develop emotional resilience against climate anxiety and climate hopelessness through contemplative narrative practices. ✓ Strengthen the educator's capacity to communicate climate change topics in an emotionally sustainable way. ✓ Connect personal experience with collective action toward climate resilience. ✓ Transform eco-anxiety into agency and hope through meaningful narratives. ✓ Cultivate empathy and solidarity among educators facing similar environmental dilemmas
Material:	• Facilitation guide for "Climate Narrative Lab". • Reflexive writing template (digital or printed). - Safe spaces (virtual or in-person) for the story circle. • Optional multimedia materials: ambient music, inspiring images of nature or resilience. • Personal reflection journal. - Audio or video recorder (to document stories if desired).
Instructions:	1. Contemplative introduction (20-25 min): Begin with a guided meditation focused on connection with nature and hope (5-8 min). - Explain the emotional impact of working with climate topics: recognize feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or overwhelm. - Present narrative as a transformation tool: how stories can reframe climate crisis as an opportunity for growth and resilience. - Share 2-3 brief examples of successful climate narratives (personal change, resilient communities). 2. Individual reflexive writing (45-60 min): Each educator writes their own "Climate Resilience Story" answering the following questions:

	- What was my first encounter with the reality of climate change? - How did it make me feel? - What is a moment when I witnessed resilience (my own or others') in the face of an environmental challenge? - How have I seen my students transform climate concerns into positive action? - What is a small sustainable victory in my life or community that I feel proud of? - What hope or future vision do I wish to convey to my students about climate resilience? 3. Story circle (60 min) - Divide educators into groups of 4-6 people. - Each participant shares their story (5-7 min of narration + 3 min of reflective questions). - Questions to facilitate deep listening: What strength or resilience did you recognize in this story?: What personal connection did you feel?: What was the moment of hope or transformation in the narrative?: Facilitator highlights cross-cutting themes: patterns of hope, moments of change, shared sources of strength. 4. Final reflection and commitment (20 min) - In the full group, educators identify 3-5 key climate resilience narratives they could teach their students. - Each educator makes a personal commitment: What is a resilience story I will bring to my classroom? How will I use it to cultivate hope and agency in my students?
Evaluation & Reflection:	• How did your relationship with climate anxiety change after writing and sharing your story? • Did you identify new sources of hope or strength by listening to other educators' narratives? • In what way did this practice better prepare you to emotionally guide your students through climate change topics? • What is a resilience narrative that you now feel confident facilitating in your classroom?

	How could you adapt this activity for different ages and educational contexts?
References:	n/a

7. Cognitive Behavioural Strategies for Climate Anxiety

Introduction

Climate anxiety, also known as eco-anxiety, represents a growing psychological challenge among university students, characterized by chronic worry, distress, and feelings of helplessness about environmental degradation and climate change. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) offers evidence-based strategies specifically adapted for addressing climate-related psychological distress by targeting the interconnected relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Doherty et al, 2024; Daeninck, Kioupi & Vercammen, 2023; Lindhe et al, 2024).

The cognitive-behavioral approach to climate anxiety recognizes that while concern about environmental issues is rational and appropriate, excessive worry can become counterproductive, leading to paralysis rather than constructive action. CBT strategies help students develop adaptive coping mechanisms that transform overwhelming anxiety into purposeful engagement with climate issues (Daeninck, Kioupi & Vercammen, 2023; Nimo et al 2025; van Valkengoed & Steg, 2024).

Key components of CBT for climate anxiety include cognitive restructuring to challenge catastrophic thinking patterns, behavioral activation to encourage meaningful environmental action, and mindfulness-based techniques to manage emotional overwhelm. Research demonstrates that individually tailored CBT interventions can effectively reduce psychological distress associated with climate change while maintaining students' environmental engagement (Nimo et al 2025; Nike et al 2023; Lindhe et al 2024).

This module provides educators with trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate strategies that validate students' environmental concerns while building psychological resilience and agency. The

approach emphasizes hope, empowerment, and collective efficacy rather than dismissing or minimizing legitimate climate concerns (Vida, 2025; Doherty et al, 2024).

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Practical Applications

Cognitive Restructuring for Climate Thoughts

Duration: 45-60 minutes		Title of the Activity: Climate Thought Challenge Worksheet	
Objectives:		✓ Identify and challenge catastrophic thinking patterns related to climate change. ✓ Develop balanced, realistic perspectives on environmental challenges. ✓ Reduce cognitive paralysis and promote constructive thinking. ✓ Build skills for ongoing self-monitoring of thought patterns.	
Material:		• Climate Thought Challenge worksheets (printed or digital). • Pens/pencils. • Whiteboard or flip chart for group sharing. • Handout on common cognitive distortions. • Optional: Timer for timed activities.	
Instructions:		Phase 1: Psychoeducation (15 minutes) 1. Explain the CBT triangle: thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are interconnected. 2. Present common cognitive distortions related to climate anxiety: - Catastrophizing: "Climate change will destroy everything". - All-or-nothing thinking: "If I'm not perfect environmentally, I'm part of the problem". - Mental filter: Focusing only on negative environmental news. - Fortune telling: "We're definitely doomed". Phase 2: Thought Identification (15 minutes) 3. Ask students to identify a recent climate-related worry or anxious thought. 4. Have them complete the worksheet sections: - What is the situation that triggered this thought?	

	- What exactly am I thinking or imagining? - What emotions am I experiencing? (Rate intensity 1-10). Phase 3: Thought Challenging (20 minutes) 5. Guide students through challenging questions: - What evidence supports this thought? What evidence contradicts it? - Am I falling into a thinking trap? Which one? - What would I tell a friend having this same thought? - What's another way to look at this situation? - If the worst happened, what could I do to cope? - What's the most realistic outcome? Phase 4: Reframing (10-15 minutes) 6. Help students develop balanced, alternative thoughts 7. Rate the intensity of emotions with the new thought 8. Identify one small, concrete action they could take
Evaluation & Reflection:	Individual Reflection: - How did your emotional intensity change after challenging the thought? - Which challenging questions were most helpful for you? - What patterns do you notice in your climate-related thinking? Group Discussion: - Share one insight about thought patterns (without sharing personal content). - Discuss how balanced thinking can lead to more effective action. - Explore the difference between healthy concern and overwhelming anxiety. Follow-up: - Encourage students to use the worksheet daily for one week. - Schedule a brief check-in session to review experiences. - Provide resources for continued practice.
References:	Lindhe, N., Sörman, K., Björklund, C., Hasselberg, N., Andersson, G., & Rozental, A. (2024). Experiences of undergoing internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy for climate change-related distress. <i>BMC Psychiatry</i>, 24(1), 1-12.

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Values-Based Climate Action Planning

Title of the Activity: Duration:	
	Values-Based Climate Action Planning Thought Challenge 60 minutes
Objectives:	✓ Connect climate action to personal values and strengths. ✓ Combat helplessness through structured action planning. ✓ Increase self-efficacy and sense of agency. ✓ Develop sustainable, personally meaningful environmental engagement. ✓ Build collective efficacy through shared action planning.
Material:	• Values identification worksheets. • Action planning templates. • Coloured pens/markers for visualization. • Sticky notes for brainstorming. • Flip chart paper. • Resource lists of local environmental organizations. • Optional: Digital platform for ongoing action tracking.
Instructions:	Phase 1: Values Exploration (20 minutes) 1. Guide students through values identification exercise: - What matters most to me in life? (relationships, justice, creativity, etc.). - How do these values connect to environmental concerns? - What kind of world do I want to help create? 2. Have students write their top 3-5 values on sticky notes 3. Create a values map showing connections to environmental action. Phase 2: Strengths and Resources Assessment (15 minutes)

4. Students identify personal strengths and resources:

- Skills (communication, organization, creativity, technical skills).
- Resources (time, connections, platforms, knowledge).
- Interests (art, policy, direct action, education).

5. Match strengths to potential climate actions.

Phase 3: Action Planning (25 minutes)

6. Introduce SMART goals framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

7. Students choose between individual and collective action goals:

- Individual actions: sustainable lifestyle changes, learning new skills.
- Collective actions: joining organizations, advocacy, community projects.

8. Complete detailed action plan including:

- Specific goal aligned with values.
- Steps needed to achieve the goal.
- Potential obstacles and solutions.
- Timeline and milestones.
- Support needed from others.

Phase 4: Implementation Strategy (15 minutes)

9. Create accountability partnerships within the group.

10. Schedule regular check-ins and progress sharing.

11. Establish reward system for milestone achievements.

12. Connect students with relevant local organizations or initiatives.

Evaluation & Reflection:	Progress Tracking: - Weekly self-assessment of goal progress. - Mood and anxiety levels before and after taking action. - Sense of agency and self-efficacy ratings. Reflection Questions: - How does taking values-based action affect my climate anxiety? - What obstacles did I encounter and how did I overcome them? - How has my sense of personal agency changed? - What support do I need to continue these actions? Group Evaluation: - Share success stories and challenges in follow-up sessions. - Peer feedback on goal achievement strategies. - Collective reflection on community impact. - Adjustment of goals based on learning and experience.
References:	Wang, H., Liu, A., & Tang, D. (2023). Coping with eco-anxiety: An interdisciplinary perspective on addressing climate change-induced mental health challenges. <i>One Health</i>, 17, 100630. Nimo, T. K. O. A., Gyamfi, N., Antwi-Boasiako, A., Frimpong, K. A., & Agyapong, V. I. O. (2025). Coping strategies for climate change anxiety: A perspective on positive psychology interventions. <i>Discover Mental Health</i>, 5(1), 1-8. van Valkengoed, A. M., Whitmarsh, L., & Böhm, G. (2024). The climate anxiety compass: A framework to map climate anxiety coping strategies. <i>One Earth</i>.

Climate Grief & Resilience Circle

Worksheet

Duration: 90-120 minutes

Climate Grief & Resilience Circle: Processing Emotions Through Dialogue and Creative Expression.

Objectives:	• Create safe, supportive space for emotional processing of climate distress. • Develop emotional literacy regarding climate-related emotions. • Process grief, anxiety, and anger through dialogue and creative expression. • Clarify personal values and discover meaning in climate distress. • Build community resilience through collective emotional support. • Foster shift from psychological turmoil toward integrated resilience. • Generate sustainable commitment to values-aligned action.
Material:	• Comfortable seating arranged in circle. • Climate Emotions Wheel handout (visual chart of climate-related emotions). • Art supplies: colored markers, pencils, large paper/poster board. • Optional creative materials: collage supplies, clay, natural materials. • Journals or reflection cards. • Soft background music or nature sounds. • Beverages and light snacks (creating "café" atmosphere). • Flip chart for group notes. • Optional: Camera or device for documenting artwork for gallery display. • Trauma-informed facilitator guide with grounding techniques.
Instructions:	Phase 1: Opening & Circle Establishment (15 minutes) 1. Welcome participants in circle format emphasizing equality and community. 2. Set group norms focused on safety, confidentiality, and non-judgment: - This is a space to feel whatever you feel. - Emotions are valid data, not problems to solve. - We listen with compassion, without needing to "fix" others. - What's shared here stays here. 3. Introduce concept of climate grief as natural, healthy response to environmental losses. 4. Explain three-phase resilience model (Pihkala, 2022):

- Phase 1: Limited awareness.
- Phase 2: Psychological turmoil (oscillation between distress, action, avoidance).
- Phase 3: Integrated resilience (sustainable engagement).
- 5. Normalize those participants may be in different phases.
- 6. Opening grounding practice (2-3 minutes):
 - Root your feet on the ground.
 - Notice 5 things you can see, 4 you can hear, 3 you can feel.

Phase 2: Emotional Literacy & Check-in (20 minutes)

7. Introduce Climate Emotions Wheel with multiple emotion categories:

- Grief/Sadness: loss, despair, sorrow.
- Anxiety/Fear: worry, dread, uncertainty.
- Anger/Rage: injustice, frustration, outrage.
- Numbness/Disconnection: apathy, dissociation.
- Guilt/Shame: personal responsibility, complicity.
- Hope/Determination: agency, purpose.

8. Guide individual emotional check-in:

- "What emotions are present for you today related to climate/environmental concerns?"
- Students select from emotion wheel or name their own.
- Rate intensity 1-10 (optional).

9. Normalize full spectrum of emotions without hierarchy.

10. Validate that feeling multiple contradictory emotions simultaneously is normal.

Phase 3: Creative Expression Activity (30-40 minutes).

11. Introduce choice-based creative expression options:

- Visual art: Create image representing climate emotions/grief (drawing, collage, painting).
- Written expression: Poetry, free-writing, letter to the Earth.
- Embodied expression: Movement, dance, gesture representing emotion (if space allows).
- Hybrid approach: Combine modalities (art + journaling).

12. Explain creative process philosophy:

- No artistic skill required; focus is on emotional expression, not product quality.
- Create what feels authentic; there are no "correct" ways to express emotion.

- Take time for both the creation and the witnessing of what emerges.

13. Facilitate creation in supportive silence or with soft background music.

14. Encourage students to notice what emotions, memories, or insights arise during creation.

15. Create natural transition: "Begin to complete your creative expression and prepare to share if you wish".

Phase 4: Group Dialogue & Witness Circle (25-35 minutes).

16. Invite voluntary sharing of creative work (no pressure):

- Students can share artwork or verbal reflection.

- Facilitate "witness circle" - others listen with full attention, minimal response.

17. Use reflective prompts for sharers:

- "What emotions or experiences did you express through your creation?"

- "What surprised you about what emerged?"

- "What does this represent about what matters to you?"

18. Response protocol from listeners:

- Thank the sharer for vulnerability.

- Avoid advice-giving, problem-solving, or minimizing.

- Share resonance: "Your expression of grief/anger also lives in me".

19. Facilitate group dialogue on themes that emerge:

- Common emotions and shared experiences.

- How different people are moving through climate distress.

- Role of community and solidarity in processing grief.

20. Create visual documentation:

- Arrange artwork in gallery display format (if appropriate).

- Take photos to create lasting record of collective expression.

Phase 5: Values Clarification & Meaning-Making (15 minutes).

21. Guide reflection on how grief reveals what people care about (Olsen et al., 2025):

- "What does your climate grief reveal about your deepest values?"

- "What are you grieving? What does that loss represent?"

22. Introduce ACT-based values clarification framework:

	- Openness: Can I accept these difficult emotions without judgment? - Centeredness: What matters most to me in response to this grief? - Engagement: What actions align with my values, even amid this crisis? 23. Students reflect on personal values revealed by their creative expression: - Environmental stewardship. - Justice and equity. - Community care. - Connection to nature. - Creating beauty and meaning. 24. Brief writing or verbal reflection on emerging insights. Phase 6: Closing & Integrated Commitment (10-15 minutes). 25. Normalize the integration phase of resilience (Pihkala, 2022): - It's possible to grieve AND continue meaningful action. - Emotional processing creates foundation for sustainable engagement. 26. Invite students to form "resilience partnerships" for ongoing support: - Exchange contact information with one person to check in. - Establish optional follow-up gatherings. 27. Closing practice: - Optional: Standing circle with hands together representing interconnection. - Collective statement affirming: "Our grief is love for the world. Our action is the expression of that love." 28. Grounding practice to transition out: - Notice how your body feels after this circle. - Bring awareness to sensations of safety and connection. - Commit to one action today that honors what you've felt and learned.
Evaluation & Reflection:	Immediate Reflection (within session): - How did emotional expression through creative work feel? - What did you notice listening to others' experiences? - What insights emerged about your values? - Rate shift in emotional intensity: before and after the circle. Post-Circle Written Reflection:

	- Which creative expression option felt most powerful and why? - What emotions were most present in the circle? - How did community support shift your relationship to climate grief? - What values did the circle help you clarify? - What one action will you take aligned with these values? Weekly Follow-up: - Progress on values-aligned actions. - Changes in emotional intensity or relationship to climate grief. - Quality of resilience partnership support. - Integration of emotional processing with ongoing engagement. Monthly Circle Check-ins: - Repeat Climate Grief & Resilience Circle for ongoing emotional processing. - Track evolution through the three resilience phases (limited awareness → turmoil → integrated). - Document sustained behavioural changes and community building. - Assess whether emotional processing is supporting or hindering climate action. Longer-term Assessment: - Development of emotional resilience and psychological flexibility. - Sustained engagement in climate action without burnout. - Quality of community relationships and collective efficacy. - Integration of climate grief with meaning, purpose, and hope.
References:	Bellehumeur, C. R. (2024). Acceptance and commitment therapy to alleviate climate-related anxiety. <i>Journal of Ecological Psychology</i>, 15(2), 143-158. De Jong, A., Smith, P., & Johnson, K. (2025). Climate cafés as a space for navigating climate emotions: A scoping review. <i>Environmental Psychology Review</i>, 18(1), 45-67. Nimo, T. K. O. A., Gyamfi, N., Antwi-Boasiako, A., Frimpong, K. A., & Agyapong, V. I. O. (2025). Coping strategies for climate change anxiety: A perspective on positive psychology interventions. <i>Discover Mental Health</i>, 5(1), 25. Olsen, S., Richards, H., & Thompson, M. (2025). How climate grief reveals values that inspire climate action. <i>Ecology and Society</i>, 30(4), 9.

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8. Climate Narratives & Storytelling

Introduction

In mainstream media, climate change is frequently portrayed through dystopian or crisis-driven narratives, often emphasizing destruction, loss, and urgency. While such narratives aim to raise awareness, they can also generate feelings of fear, paralysis, and climate anxiety, especially among young people. Evidence shows that approximately 65% of youth report experiencing negative emotions related to climate change, such as sadness, anger, helplessness, and even sleep disturbances (Frick et al., 2022).

To address this growing emotional burden, scholars and practitioners are increasingly calling for alternative climate communication approaches that balance urgency with hope. These approaches aim to promote psychological resilience, enabling individuals and communities to face the climate crisis with agency rather than despair (Nimo et al., 2025). Developing psychological competencies such as emotional regulation, stress management, collaboration, and symbolic communication—particularly through arts, storytelling, and creative expression—has been identified as a key strategy for building climate resilience and wellbeing (Ibrahim, 2024). Among these, **climate narratives and storytelling** stand out as powerful and accessible tools for transforming how people feel, think, and act about climate change.

Narratives shape the way individuals make sense of the world; they link facts to feelings, personal experience to collective meaning. By creating and sharing alternative narratives—stories that emphasize resilience, cooperation, innovation, and positive change—participants can reframe the climate crisis as a collective, solvable challenge rather than an inevitable catastrophe (Meffert and Caruana, 2025).

Within this context, the **Rise Up Project** integrates **climate narratives & storytelling** as core pedagogical tools to empower young people to voice their climate emotions, build intergenerational understanding, and imagine hopeful futures. Through storytelling exercises, participants can express fears and hopes, engage empathetically with others' experiences, and co-create visions of sustainable futures. This strengthens both individual wellbeing and community resilience, fostering a sense of hope and belonging within the broader environmental movement.

References:

Frick, J., Hermelink, A. H., Kause, A., & Büssing, A. (2022). *Climate anxiety among youth: Prevalence, emotional responses, and coping strategies*. Environmental Psychology, 83, 102466. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envp.2022.102466>

Ibrahim, M. (2024). Applying Emotional Regulation Strategies to Manage Climate Distress. IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1007813>

Meffert, C. S., & Caruana, C. (2025). Narrating New Future Visions: Collective Storytelling About the Climate Crisis. In J. Bentz & J. Ristić Trajković (Eds.), *Imagining, Designing and Teaching Regenerative Futures: Art-Science Approaches and Inspirations From Around the World* (pp. 151–155). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-9029-9_23

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Practical Applications

The Climate Justice Tree

Title of the Activity: Duration:		The Climate Justice Tree 60 minutes	
Module:		Climate Narratives & Storytelling	
Objectives		✓ To deepen knowledge and understanding ✓ To foster collective responsibility ✓ To encourage expression and creativity ✓ To create a shared vision and connection ✓ To strengthen agency and personal experiences	

Material:	• A2 paper • Sticky notes • Magazines • Writing stationary • Scissors • Glue
Instructions:	Introduction (10 minutes): Engage in a discussion about climate justice, emphasising its significance and key elements such as equity, responsibility, and fairness. Create a 10-minute presentation with examples and introduce the upcoming activity. Building the Tree (25 minutes): Split students into three groups: roots, trunk, and leaves. • The 'Roots' group will identify causes of climate change, such as excessive consumption or deforestation. • The 'Trunk' group will discuss current impacts and climate justice issues. • The 'Leaves' group will generate solutions and visions for a just future. Each group will write, draw, or create cutouts to place on their corresponding tree sections. Reflection and Discussion (20 minutes): Once the tree is set up, facilitate a group discussion about the Climate Justice Tree, its interconnected components, and strategies for achieving a just and sustainable future. The class collaborates to create a story, share various narratives, or discuss personal experiences and perspectives on the topic.
Evaluation & Reflection:	Group Reflection: • <i>What patterns or common themes did we notice in our contributions?</i>

	• <i>How do our individual stories connect to create a larger climate justice narrative?</i> • <i>What emotions came up during this activity (e.g., hope, courage, solidarity)?</i> • <i>How did working together influence your understanding of collective responsibility?</i> The class can then evaluate the outcomes of the exercise: • <i>Did you understand climate justice complexities</i> • <i>Do you feel a sense of hopeful/positive emotions?</i> • <i>Can you imagine possible solutions?</i> • <i>What part of the activity was most meaningful to you?</i> • <i>What would you change or add to improve this experience?</i>
References:	Parsons, M.; Pratt, S. (2024). <i>Climate Resilience Toolkit: Arts-Based Activities for Changing Climates</i> Preventionweb, www.preventionweb.net/publication/climate-resilience-toolkit-arts-based-activities-changing-climates. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

Visioning Exercise

Title of the Activity:	Visioning Exercise
Duration:	90 minutes
Module:	Climate Narratives & Storytelling
Objectives	✓ To foster futures thinking ✓ To support emotional wellbeing ✓ To encourage self-expression ✓ To strengthen collective understanding

Material:	• A4 papers • Magazines • Writing/Art stationary • Scissors • Glue
Instructions:	1.Guided meditation: Students should observe, acknowledge and reflect what is on their mind. Professors guide their breath work. Option to use calming sounds or a soothing narration. 2.Visioning exercise: Choose a specific topic and guide students on a future visualisation. Ask them to visualise: What do you envision your community to be like in 50 years? What does be in nature look like to you? What does a healed planet look like to you? Students should use the available materials to represent their visions. 3.Group work: In pairs or small groups, students should reflect, share impressions and discuss the exercise with a trusted other. Together, they will formulate a short story that reflects and narrates both visions. If comfortable, the groups share with the class.
Evaluation & Reflection:	The facilitator must incentivise reflection in different moments of the exercise: Individual Reflection: • How did meditation influence your ability to imagine a future? • What key elements stood out in your vision (places, people, emotions, values)?

	- Did this exercise make you feel more hopeful or motivated? Why or why not? Small Group Reflection: - In what ways were your visions similar or different? - What values or ideas overlapped between your stories? - How might your shared story inspire collective action or collaboration? The class can then evaluate the outcomes of the exercise: - Did it reduce feelings of climate anxiety? - Are you feeling more hopeful about the future? - Do you think differently about your role in shaping the future? - What part of the exercise resonated with you the most (meditation, drawing/writing, sharing, story-making)? - What would you improve or add?
References:	Neuhoff, R. (2023). Meditation-inspired Visioning: An Experiential Method to Envision the Future. <i>Cubic Journal</i>, 6(6), 116–119. https://doi.org/10.31182/cubic.2023.6.64

Intergenerational Storytelling

Title of the Activity:	Intergenerational Storytelling
Duration:	90 minutes
Module:	Climate Narratives & Storytelling

Objectives	✓ To build intergenerational empathy and connection ✓ To deepen awareness of environmental change as a lived experience ✓ To strengthen futures thinking and collective imagination ✓ To encourage emotional expression and reflective communication ✓ To cultivate a sense of continuity and shared responsibility
Material:	• Pen and paper (preferably non-digital, to encourage presence and reflection) • A person from another generation (ideally aged 60+) to interview
Instructions:	Introduction (15 minutes): The facilitator explains the exercise to the participants. The following script can be used: <i>You'll reach out to someone from another generation (preferably 60+ years old) to have a 20-minute conversation about how they have experienced environmental changes throughout their life. You'll prepare your questions today and carry out your conversation before our next meeting on [insert date]. During our next session, you'll retell their story speaking from their perspective to explore how environmental changes shape our emotions, values, and sense of responsibility across generations.</i> Participants can create their own questions or use some of the proposed below: • <i>What was the weather like when you were growing up?</i> • <i>How is the weather different now?</i> • <i>What kinds of environmental changes have you noticed positive or negative?</i>

- *Did you or your community expect these changes to happen?*
- *How did you feel before, during, and after these changes occurred?*
- *How do you feel about the environment today compared to before?*

Encourage participants to listen deeply, not only for information but also for emotion, values, and memories.

2. **Time to reach out** (5 minutes): Give participants a few minutes to think about who they would like to talk to. If possible, they can reach out immediately or plan when and how they will make contact (e.g., call, visit, video chat).
3. **Conversation** (20+ minutes, completed independently): Participants conduct their intergenerational interviews in their own time before the next session. Encourage them to take brief notes during or immediately after the conversation to capture key themes and feelings.
4. **Reflection and Discussion** (25 minutes): Ask participants to pair up with someone of their choice. Each participant retells their interviewee's story as if it were their own stepping into the other person's perspective.
5. **Group Reflection** (25 minutes)
After storytelling, invite participants to share reflections in a larger group.
Emphasize the importance of respect, empathy, and confidentiality participants are sharing not only their own feelings but also someone else's lived experience.

Evaluation & Reflection:	Pair Reflection: • <i>Did your conversation partner express worry about environmental changes?</i> • <i>If yes, did their worries come true?</i> • <i>Did those worries help them act or cope?</i> • <i>How did it feel to talk to someone about environmental change and emotion?</i> • <i>Did you learn any strategies or ways of coping with environmental worry?</i> • <i>How did this experience influence your own perspective on environmental change and related emotions?</i> The class can then evaluate the outcomes of the exercise: • <i>Did this exercise helped you understand the human and emotional side of environmental change?</i> • <i>Do you feel a sense of hope or positive connection across generations?</i> • <i>Can you imagine possible solutions or new ways forward?</i> • <i>What part of the activity was most meaningful to you?</i> • <i>What would you change or add to improve this experience?</i>
References:	Riveros, R., Yang, X. F., Gonzalez Anaya, M. J., & Immordino-Yang, M. H. (2023). Sages and Seekers: The development of diverse adolescents' transcendent thinking and purpose through an intergenerational storytelling program. <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology</i>, 19(5), 849–861. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2023.2282774 Elias, A., & Brown, A. D. (2022). The role of intergenerational family stories in mental health and wellbeing. <i>Frontiers in psychology</i>, 13, 927795. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.927795



Project Partners:

