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CLIMATE EMOTIONS & THE MENTAL TOLL OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON YOUTH

Climate Emotions Wheel

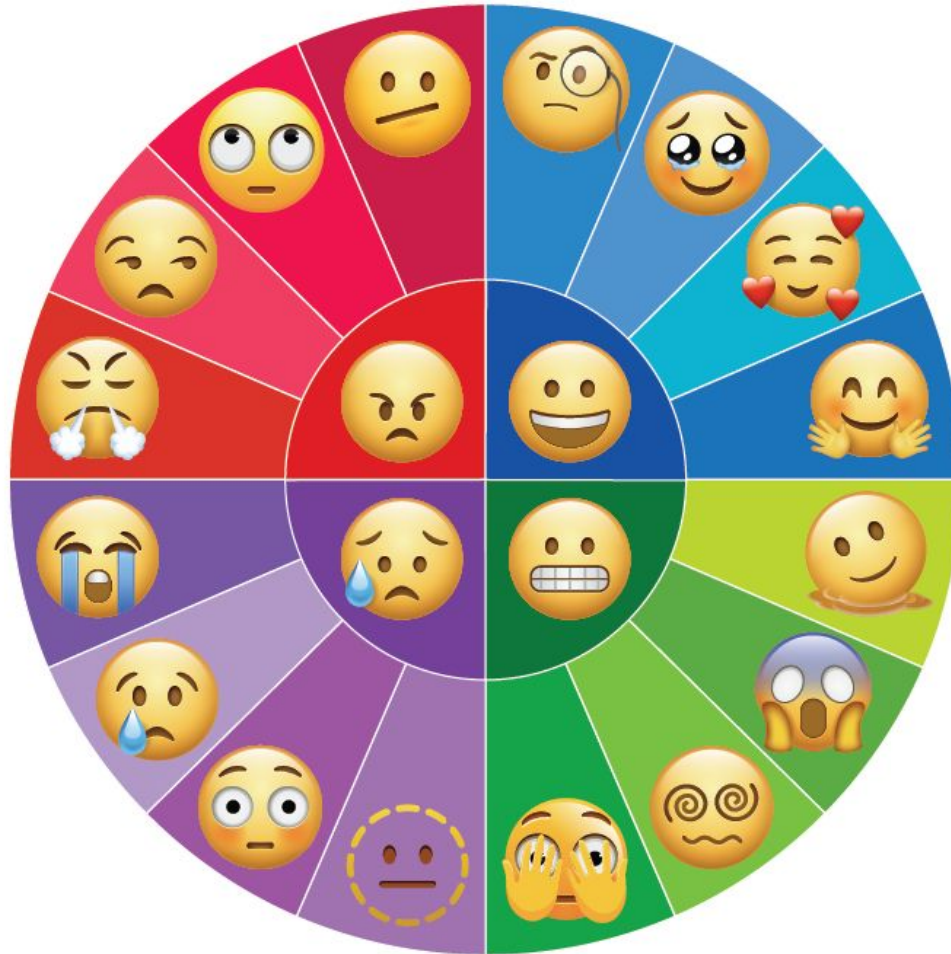


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ClimateMentalHealth.Net

Climate Emotions Wheel



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Pihkala (2022)

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH article

Front. Clim., 14 January 2022
Sec. Climate Risk Management
Volume 3 - 2021 |
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fclim.2021.738154>

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Toward a Taxonomy of Climate Emotions

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Edited by
 **Nino Antadze**
University of Prince

There is a growing evidence that emotions shape people's reactions to the climate crisis in profound but complex ways. Climate emotions are related to resilience, climate action, and psychological well-being and health. However, there is currently a



Climate
Mental Health
Network

A Guide To Climate Emotions

Panu Pihkala
with Anya Kamenetz



Acknowledgements:

Inspiration from **Karla McLaren**'s work on emotions
and **The Atlas Of The Heart** by Brené Brown (2021);
gratitude to comments by Sarah Newman



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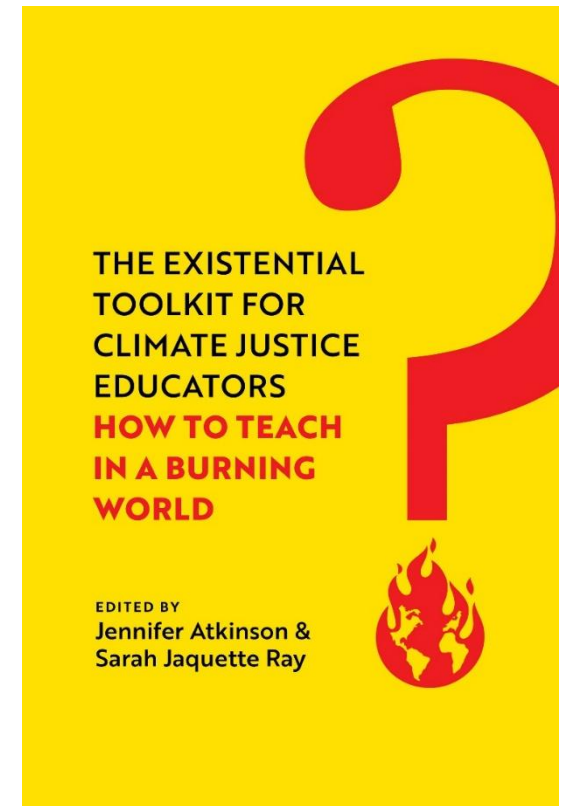
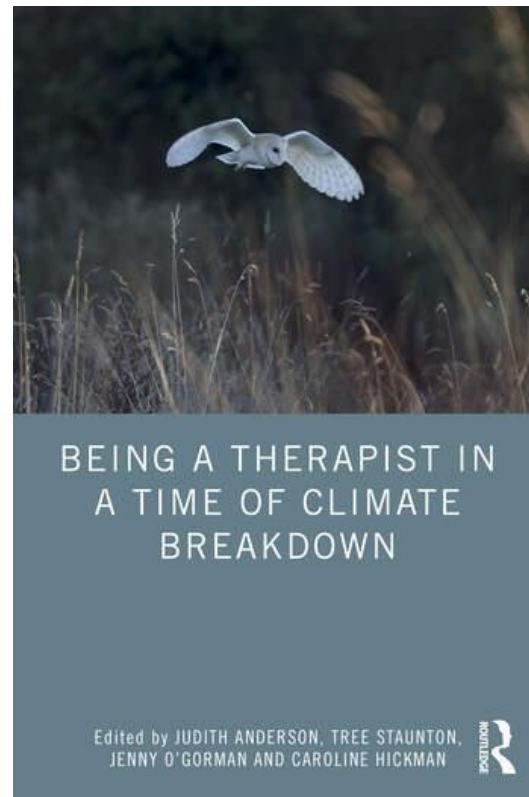
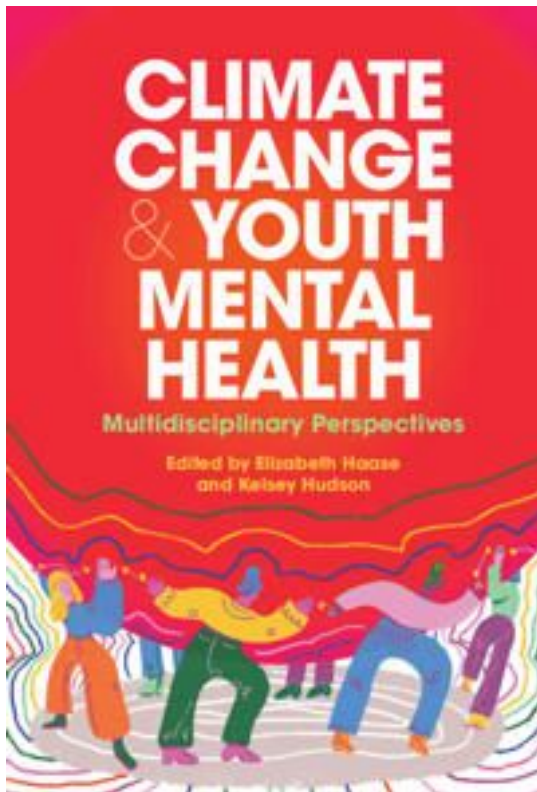
Major points

- Global research shows that the climate crisis is a major stressor in young people's lives
- Social support and political determination would help in relation to climate distress/anxiety, but instead, many countries suffer from lack of both in relation to climate change
- Communities and networks can offer support, psychoeducation, and efficacy

Some major points (cont.)

- Fundamentally, emotions are energies which help people to react to situations, but people need skills of constructive engagement with emotions
- Climate emotions are part of a broader array of “emotions between humans and the more-than-human world”
- For youth work, see Panu’s chapter in the new Youth Partnership book

Recent books (2024)



Climate anxiety / distress



“Here’s your problem—it looks like you’re paying attention to what’s going on.”

"The Lancet climate anxiety study"

thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext

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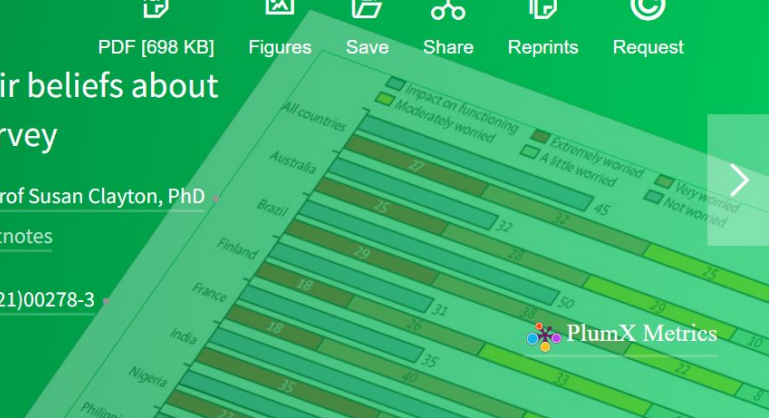
Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey

Caroline Hickman, MSc [†] • Elizabeth Marks, ClinPsyD [†] • Panu Pihkala, PhD • Prof Susan Clayton, PhD

R Eric Lewandowski, PhD • Elouise E Mayall, BSc • et al. [Show all authors](#) • [Show footnotes](#)

Open Access • Published: December, 2021 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00278-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3)

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Summary

Introduction

Methods

Summary

Background

Climate change has important implications for the health and

A useful report

- Lawrance, E.L. *et al.* (2022) 'The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: A Narrative Review of Current Evidence, and its Implications', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 34(5), pp. 443–498. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2022.2128725>.

Youth and climate emotions

- Fine, J.C. *et al.* (2023) 'A song in a cold place: the role of emotions in motivating youth activism and advancing justice at the COP', *Climate and Development*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2023.2261406>.
- Diffey, J. *et al.* (2022) "'Not about us without us" – the feelings and hopes of climate-concerned young people around the world', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 34(5), pp. 499–509. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2022.2126297>.

Interview studies

frontiersin.org/journals/political-science/articles/10.3389/fpos.2022.1063741/full

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH article

Front. Polit. Sci., 17 January 2023
Sec. Political Participation
Volume 4 - 2022 |
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2022.1063741>

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Complex dynamics of climate emotions among environmentally active Finnish and American young people

Isabel Coppola¹ Panu Pihkala^{2,3,4*}

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Edited by Sarah PICKARD
Université de la

Socio-ecological modelling (Crandon et al. 2022)

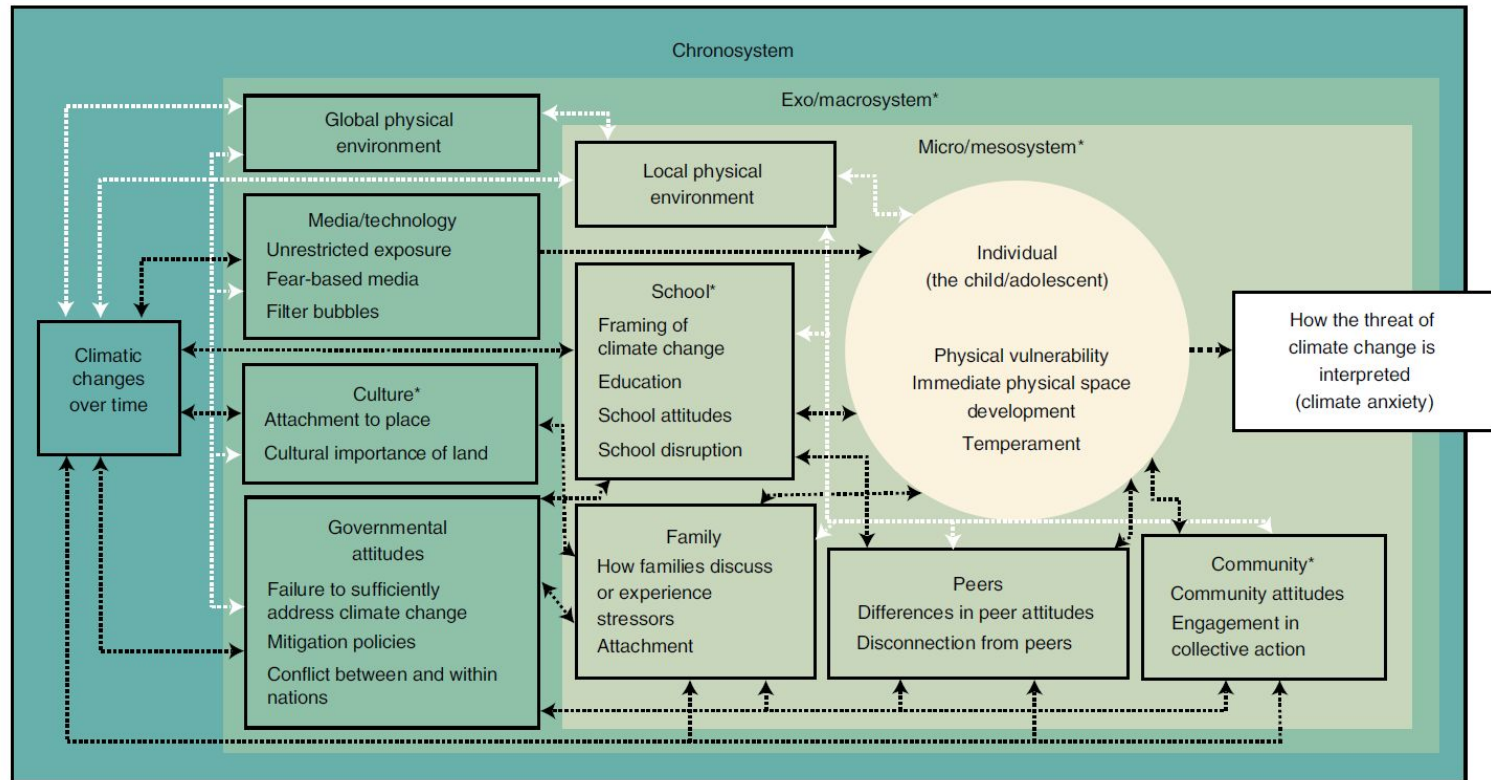


Fig. 1 | A social-ecological framework of climate anxiety for children and adolescents. This model depicts factors that may influence climate anxiety for a

A very good new model

- Crandon, T.J. *et al.* (2024) 'A theoretical model of climate anxiety and coping', *Discover psychology*, 4(1), pp. 94–16. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44202-024-00212-8>.
- The image on the previous page:
Crandon, T.J. *et al.* (2022) 'A social–ecological perspective on climate anxiety in children and adolescents', *Nature Climate Change*, 12, pp. 123–131. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-021-01251-y>.

Marks & Hickman (2023)

← → ↻ 🔒 nature.com/articles/s44220-023-00075-3

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Eco-distress is not a pathology, but it still hurts

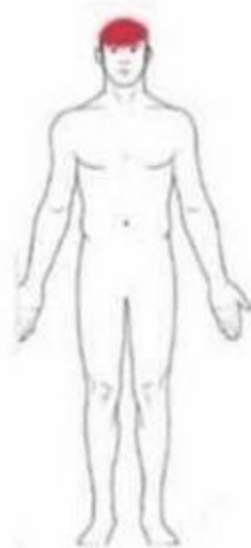
[Elizabeth Marks](#) ✉ & [Caroline Hickman](#)

[Nature Mental Health](#) **1**, 379–380 (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

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Climate change and ecological emergencies threaten life on Earth. This creates a distress that is in danger of being pathologized and dismissed. We examine how such feelings are rational and underpinned by instinctive compassion for the environment and each other. We must respond by supporting people to act with their full potential, amidst systemic and government failures.

"Where does it hurt?"



Headache



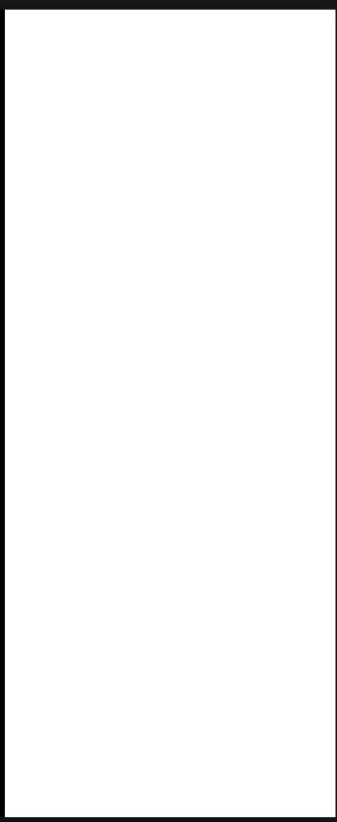
**Stomach
ache**



**guilt and anxiety from
environment collapse**

Hidden or half-hidden impacts

- Where do we see the impacts of climate change on youth mental health?
 - Not only in surveys about levels of anxiety, but also in life paths; both positive and negative
- “Standby youth” (Arya & Henn 2021), but also youth who practice a lot of distancing
 - Socially organized (psychological) defences?
- How to deal with social contradictions around climate emotions?



OMAT ILMU

Pain heiveltä? Yngä

A Rocha Suomi

Tawassa on reka

WHYSTEEDOT

Marika Aaltonen

Heini Järven

Anni Mikaelsson

Salla Ranta

Teemu Alanko

Piiga Sipari

Heidi-Maja Nevala

Maija Paim

Sanna Suoripää

Maria Huhmari

Hannu Varko

Juha Salonen

Johanna Suikka

Maija Green

Eeva Kempainen

KYSELYT

Luomakello

Eeva Piiga

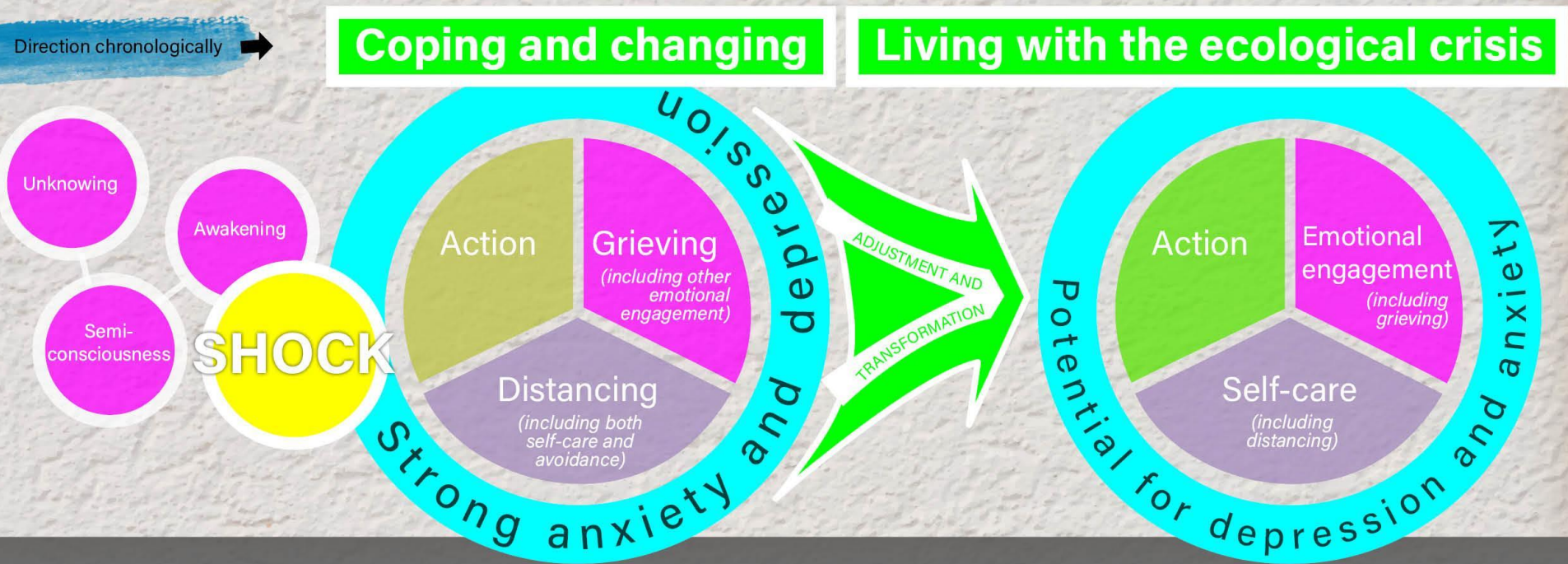
Maija, Mikka, Eino

USAAN WHYSTEEDOTIA

A deep process of change

- Fundamental assumptions of the modern (industrialized) world are being questioned
- Meanings in life are changing
- Can evoke strong resistance, problematic nostalgia, aggressive defences
- Aim: constructive engagement in a process of “meaning reconstruction” (Robert A. Neimeyer) (grief research)
- Narrative work: re-telling who we are

Process model (Pihkala 2022)



Process Model of Eco-anxiety and Ecological Grief

Panu Pihkala
Sustainability 2022

Semiconsciousness refers to a complex phase of both knowing and not knowing about the severity of the ecological crisis.

Awakening refers to a realization of the severity of the crisis. Sometimes people try to repress this Awakening and return to Semiconsciousness, but that is not completely possible and causes dissonance.

Shock and trauma may result in various ways from Awakening.

Coping and Changing: For healthy adjustment and necessary transformation, all three dimensions are needed (see also Figure 2).

* **Action** refers to doing something constructive in relation to the ecological crisis. Example: joining climate demonstrations.

* **Grieving** refers to encountering explicitly the various loss-related emotions engendered by the ecological crisis.

Example: talking about ecological grief at a safe discussion group.

* **Distancing** refers to various means of taking distance from the ecological crisis. Example: staying away from environmental news on Sunday (self-care) or denial of outcome severity for oneself (disavowal/denial).

* **Strong Anxiety and/or Depression** refers to various possible manifestations of strong and difficult mental states which are significantly impacted by the ecological crisis. These include anxiety states and increased anxiety tendencies, varieties of depressed moods, burnout, longer states of resignation, and "eco-paralysis".

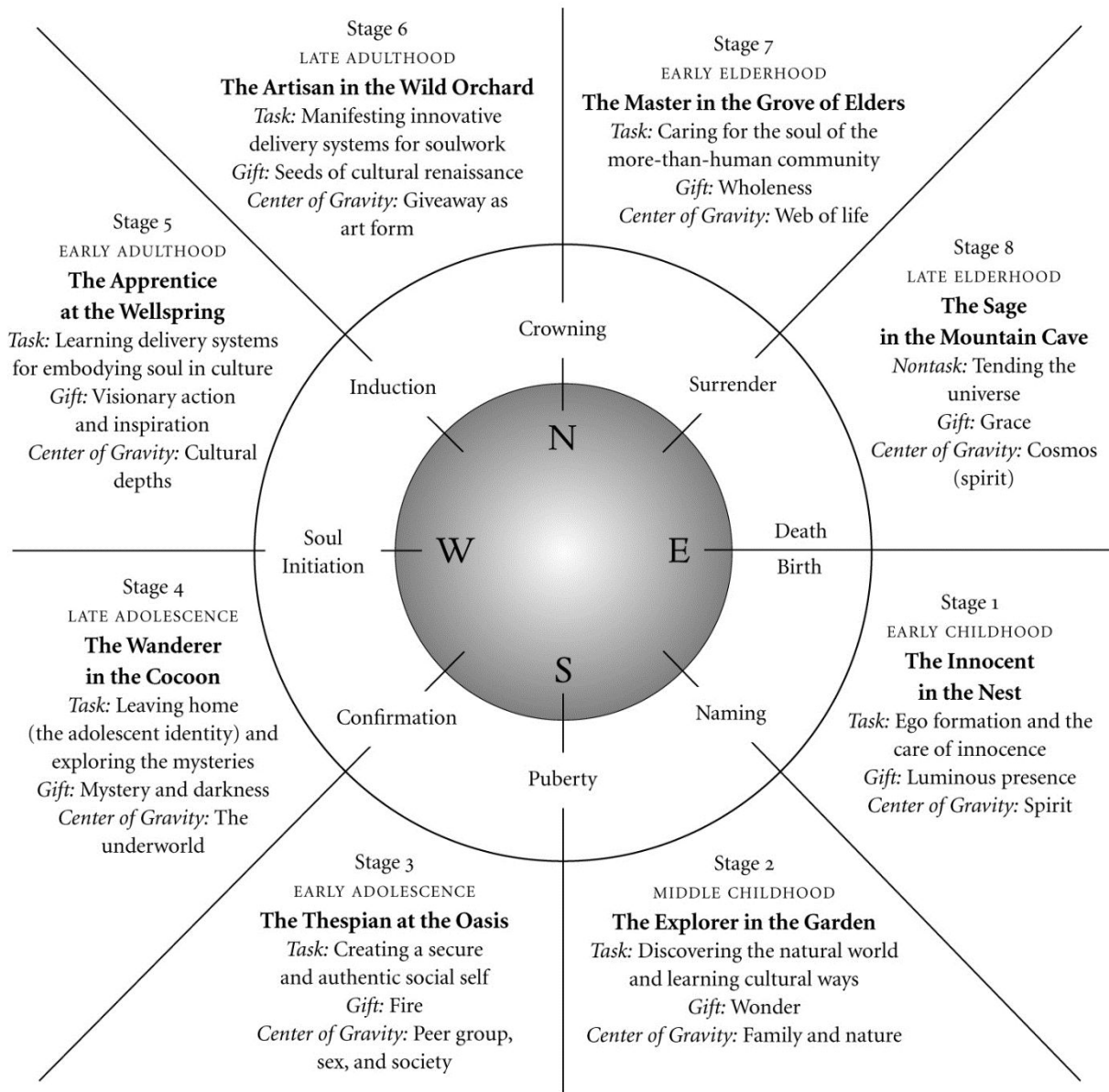
Adjustment and Transformation refers to a long-term process where all three dimensions are engaged with and people find ways to both adapt and change.

When enough Adjustment and Transformation has happened, people enter this phase where there is more awareness and control about the three dimensions. For various dynamics and terms related to these dynamics, such as "acceptance" and "meaning", see section 4.2.4. in the article.

All three dimensions still need engagement with, and they still include scale in them (there are various intensities).

The titles and subtitles of two dimensions have switched places, reflecting changes due to Adjustment and Transformation. While Grieving still continues, major aspects of it have been engaged with, and there is more room for encountering other emotions. Distancing has become more conscious and more balanced, and thus Self-care is the ruling form, although there may still be moments of stronger and more unconscious disavowal.

Potential for depression and stronger anxiety still exists, and it is possible that in the long run, various depressive moods are a major threat as many aspects of the ecological crisis become more difficult in the coming decades.



The Eight Soulcentric/ Ecocentric Stages of Human Development
From Nature and the Human Soul © Bill Plotkin (New World Library, 2008)
soulcraft@animas.org

Forthcoming resources about the Process Model

- QueerBrownVegan:
Teaching Climate Together –video
- Short animated film on the process of eco-anxiety (Elin Kelsey et co.): The Dance

Final remarks

Kiitos!

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