

Thesis Abstract: Georgie Linscott with Ms. Waring and Dr. Bratlee, PhD.

As the climate crisis worsens, recent years have witnessed a surge in awareness about climate change-induced stress, anxiety, guilt around inaction, and distress among young populations in developed countries. Studies have uncovered a drought in climate-aware therapy conversations, prepared therapists, and a deep stigma around having climate-related conversations that greatly raised levels of Climate Anxiety. With the goal of finding the most effective and practical method of mitigating Climate Anxiety and guilt, research began by analyzing several clinical methods that yielded promising but untested or unscalable results, while the Good Grief Networks's cornerstone 10-step Zoom program and book proved better yet lie behind a paywall.

Attending a small-scale free Zoom conversation hosted by the Climate Psychology Alliance showed promising results, while utilizing a small private high school - BU Academy - for two case studies proved insightful in shaping the hypothesis that discussing and connecting over climate effectively and practically mitigates Climate Anxiety. Results of a standard 20-question quantifying scale to students, followed by an intimate group discussion and following survey, were relatively consistent with the alternative hypothesis with a greater emphasis on motivation to make change in the climate crisis.

Overall, while the Climate Anxiety crisis remains on the rise and may still be absent from relatively high-income communities, discussing climate change has the potential to inspire a new generation of climate-aware activists and innovators and perhaps even successfully mitigate the effects of Climate Anxiety.