



COAST

GET THINKING

GET TOGETHER

GET INSPIRED



Copyright © 2022 Bude Climate Partnership & Storylines. All rights reserved.

## GET THINKING

Lochy is 16 years old and talks extremely eloquently of his love of nature and his heartfelt concern for his generation's future. Unfortunately, Lochy is not the only young person attempting to make sense of a rapidly changing world.

**A shocking 59% of young people state they are extremely worried about climate change, with 50% reporting feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, anger, powerlessness and guilt, and 45% saying these feelings negatively impact on their daily lives.**

Young people are not the only ones struggling with these complex emotions. Climate anxiety, as it is currently known, can affect anyone of us, especially once we start to understand the enormity of the challenge ahead. For many of us, the best remedy is to become more active



in pushing for the changes we want to see in our communities and in the wider world. However, it can take time to navigate our way through to action, and the process can be challenging. It is important to remember that if you are feeling anxious about climate change and the future, it is a perfectly natural and healthy response to a high stress situation. Talking about it with friends or community members who understand is the first step to feeling better.



## GET TOGETHER

If you're part of a local group and would like to explore this theme more through additional activities, then you might like to use our 'Hands On' toolkits. Contact the Bude Climate Partnership to find out more.

Teachers wanting to use these stories in the classroom can download additional resources for Vicko's Story, Lochy's Story, Simon's Story, Hilary's Story, Jan's Story and Alex's Story, via the 'Local Voices' pages on the Bude Climate Partnership website.

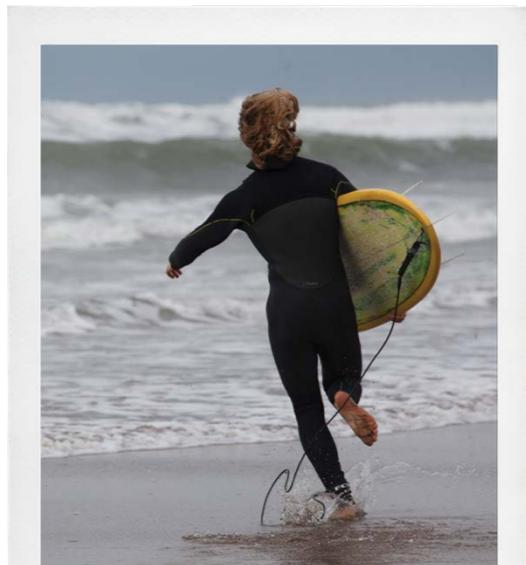


## GET INSPIRED

The climate is changing at a rate and in unpredictable ways that mean we are facing a deeply uncertain future.



The scale of the problem can feel totally out of our control, and we can experience a sense of crippling powerlessness. For adults and young people alike, confronting this reality can result in negative feelings which



can impact on our mental health. If left unaddressed, climate anxiety could progress into depression, anxiety disorder and substance misuse, with young people most at risk.

With this in mind we have compiled some tips on how we can all look out for one another and transform our individual worries into meaningful and positive action, building a stronger community for the future.

### LET'S TALK

If any of these feelings are familiar to you, then don't be embarrassed to speak up. Whether it's a family member you





are comfortable with, a friend or a professional, it is always better to talk about how you are feeling.

## **LISTEN**

Allow space for thoughts, feelings, and emotions to come up, for yourself and for others. Sometimes this can be scary given that our society has distanced itself from strong emotions. Grief and anger are common responses that often just need room to be heard.

## **DON'T DISMISS**

Humans like to feel in control, and therefore uncertainty is difficult

for us to manage. Climate change is a complex issue that no one can fix on their own. So, it is good to stay focused on the things we can control or influence. Whatever comes up in discussion, try not to minimise the problem, especially if people are in a heightened emotional state.

## **REMEMBER**

Our community's response to Covid-19 has shown us the best of humanity, with local volunteer support networks quickly forming to look after the most vulnerable amongst us. This sense of camaraderie, which

may be familiar to those of us who lived through WWII, is a very healthy function of a resilient community.

## **DON'T LET PERFECT BE THE ENEMY OF GOOD**

We are all coming to the table with different experiences, skills and knowledge. Whether it's baking a cake for a community event, talking to your neighbour about what you are doing in the garden, or standing for election, these actions really do add up to change in the wider picture. It's important not to fall into the all-too-common pitfalls of judgement

or finger pointing, but to remain open to the positive things that are happening.

## **GET MOVING**

Quite literally, if you are struggling with anxiety one of the best things you can do is be more physically active, and there's no better place than in nature. Walking, wild swimming, whatever it is that you enjoy, make time for it.

## **FIND NATURE**

Although sometimes bittersweet, deepening our connection to nature is one of the best balms for climate anxiety. For instance, a walk in a forest has been found to improve our sleep,

regulate our immune system, boost cardiovascular health, and reduce overall stress, while promoting positive emotions. In fact, trees release chemicals that do all of this for us!

## MINDFULNESS AND GRATITUDE

A growing body of evidence documents the health benefits of these secular practices. Just taking a moment to appreciate what we do have often has remarkable healing properties for our minds. Mindfulness improves our physical and mental health in many ways, such as reducing stress. In turn, this enables us to form better relationships with each other and with the living world at large.

How you engage with such practices is personal to you and can be done privately or as part of a group. On the opposite page is an example of a simple daily practice you can follow.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Where possible, take positive action to address the concerns raised by young people. You could try reducing your family's contribution to climate change, join an action group, or write to our MP, for example. Research suggests that young people's distress is the result of perceived inaction by those in power, particularly our government. Young people see leaders, who should be protecting them instead

condemning them to a world with an inhospitable climate and depleted of nature. So, the best thing we can do to help our young people, is stand side-by-side with them. Show them that we too care, want change, and are not scared to demand it.

Many of our children and young people have already been inspired to take to the streets. With climate change on the school curriculum, a lot of young people are more engaged with the climate crisis than us adults – just like Lochy.



Mon

### GRATITUDE

Find things to be grateful for and include them in a loving kindness meditation or gratitude journal.

Tue

### COMPASSION

Set an intention to decrease any suffering or pain in others that you encounter throughout your day.

Wed

### ACCEPTANCE

Accept and appreciate yourself and others without trying to change them or yourself.

Thur

### MEANING

Think about your ultimate purpose in life, and where and how you find meaning.

Fri

### FORGIVENESS

Forgive yourself first, and then extend your forgiveness to others for any past transgressions.

Sat

### CELEBRATION

Make sure to take a day to celebrate all the joy in your life and in the lives of others.

Sun

### REFLECTION

Reflect on your week, month, or year using meditation, prayer or just simple awareness.

## DIVE DEEPER

To find out more about climate anxiety, and what you can do to manage it, the following website offers a basic overview and additional resources.

[www.enviral.co.uk/why-we-need-to-talk-about-eco-anxiety](http://www.enviral.co.uk/why-we-need-to-talk-about-eco-anxiety)

### **THE CLIMATE PSYCHOLOGY ALLIANCE**

provides resources, podcasts, and support groups should you, or anyone you care for, need it, or if you want to dig a little deeper [www.climatepsychologyalliance.org](http://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org)

Some books that may be of interest:

*Active Hope* by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone – for anyone seeking a new way to frame how we are feeling and looking for a way to positive action

*Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer – if you are interested in other world views, this book offers a beautiful insight into how Native American Indian culture embodies nature, and how we can learn from its ancient wisdom.

## GET INVOLVED

Here are a few suggestions on how you might use your own skills to get involved. Some of us may need additional support with our mental health, or to make sense of the reality we face, before we can even think about where to go next.

**THE PEARL EXCHANGE** offers support for the 18–30-year-olds. Set up by people from our own community for the benefit of our community, they work to support young adults at what can be a difficult time of life, providing practical support and opportunities for creative, nature and cultural engagement. To find out more please visit:

[www.thepearlexchange.org.uk](http://www.thepearlexchange.org.uk)

**BLEND** is a youth collective for 11–16-year-olds, offering a safe and inclusive social environment with an array of structured activities.

[www.blendand.com](http://www.blendand.com)



**MAN DOWN CORNWALL** are a male peer-to-peer mentoring service that holds regular meetings in Cornwall. It offers a unique, informal, and friendly space to get together and talk about mental health struggles. [www.mandown-cornwall.co.uk](http://www.mandown-cornwall.co.uk)

**RETHINK** is a nationwide mental health charity that holds weekly meetings in Bude for women to come together and talk whilst getting creative. [www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/support-groups/bude-rethink-womens-group](http://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/support-groups/bude-rethink-womens-group)

Or if you fancy getting active in nature, **BUDE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH** group are always looking for locals to help support their campaigns in our area. [www.friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/budefriendsoftheearth](http://www.friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/budefriendsoftheearth)

## THANK YOU.

We hope our suggestions and advice leave you feeling inspired. Climate change can be challenging to think and talk about, so if any of your questions haven't been answered or you need support or you have an idea you want to pursue, then please get in touch with the Bude Climate Partnership. We're here to help you.

Email [info@budeclimate.org](mailto:info@budeclimate.org)

### SUPPORTED BY:



*This toolkit has been developed by Storylines, a Community Interest Company who use the common language of story to bring people together to share, celebrate, learn and connect. For more visit [www.storylines.org.uk](http://www.storylines.org.uk). Designed by Georgia Byron.*