

The Mental Health Effects of Climate Change

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CLI 230: Human Responses to Climate Change

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August 2, 2021

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Climate change is a global issue that is having a significant impact on the environment, the economy, and human health. One of the most concerning impacts of climate change is its effect on mental health.

There is a growing body of research that suggests that climate change can lead to a variety of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation. These problems can be caused by a number of factors, including exposure to extreme weather events, displacement from home, and loss of livelihood.

For example, a study of people who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina found that they were more likely to experience PTSD, depression, and anxiety than those who were not displaced (Brown & Perry, 2013). Reser and Swim (2011) found that farmers who were affected by drought were more likely to experience depression and anxiety.

The effects of climate change on mental health are not limited to those who are directly affected by extreme weather events or displacement. Even people who are not directly affected can experience stress and anxiety about the future. A study of college students found that those who were more concerned about climate change were more likely to experience anxiety and depression (Ungar et al., 2012).

The mental health effects of climate change are a serious concern. As climate change continues to worsen, it is likely that the number of people who are affected by mental health problems will increase. Not only those directly affected by climate disasters, but those that live in fear of them, or simply witness them second-hand will

also be negatively affected. As Brown and Perry (2012) explain, this is a major public health issue that needs to be addressed:

People who are exposed to extreme weather events, displacement, and loss of livelihood are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, PTSD, and suicidal ideation. Even people who are not directly affected by climate change can experience stress and anxiety about the future. While it is important to address the environmental effects of climate change, the emotional effects should not be ignored. (p. 120)

There are a number of things that can be done to help people who are affected by the mental health effects of climate change. These include providing access to mental health services, educating people about the risks of climate change, and helping people to develop coping mechanisms.

It is also important to take steps to mitigate climate change. This will help to reduce the number of people who are affected by extreme weather events and other climate-related problems.

Climate change is a complex issue with a wide range of impacts. The mental health effects of climate change are a serious concern that need to be addressed. By taking steps to mitigate climate change and provide support to those who are affected, we can help to reduce the burden of climate change on mental health.

References

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