

## Climate crisis and coping: a mental health perspective

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Climate change is an escalating global threat with dire consequences for both the environment and human health. It causes irreversible damage, directly impacting well-being and escalating without prompt action. In Nepal, mental health conditions impose a substantial burden, with only 25% of health facilities providing basic services, leaving over 75% in need without care.

The complex relationship between climate change and mental health exacerbates social and environmental risk factors, leading to emotional distress, the emergence of new mental health conditions, and the worsening of existing disorders. Climate change exposes communities to acute hazards like hurricanes and wildfires, increasing stress, trauma, and mental health conditions. The gradual effects, including rising temperatures and sea-level rise, contribute to existential threats and anxiety.

Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), such as Nepal, face disproportionate impacts due to existing vulnerabilities. To address this emergency, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) must be strengthened. The World Health Organization (WHO) urges countries to expedite climate change responses, including mental health integration. Urgent actions include integrating climate change into mental health policies, expanding MHPSS in climate change and health programs, building upon global commitments, implementing multisectoral and community-based approaches, and addressing funding gaps.

The intricate link between climate change and mental health demands a holistic and coordinated response to ensure the well-being of individuals and communities facing this global challenge. This requires commitment across sectors and financial support to prioritize MHPSS and climate action.

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