

Supporting youth and educators in navigating eco-distress, building solidarity, and cultivating hope

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**Center for a
Regenerative Future**
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



Graduate School of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Our Vision

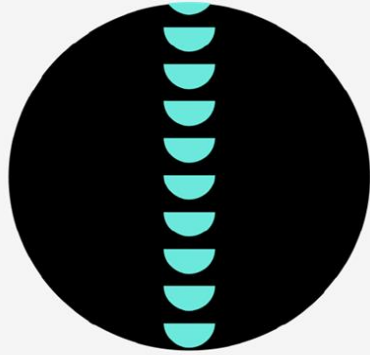
The Center for a Regenerative Future is a hub for developing student, staff, and faculty ecological justice scholars who are dedicated to creating a *just, joyful, and regenerative future.*



Turn & Talk – what does
'regenerative' mean to you?

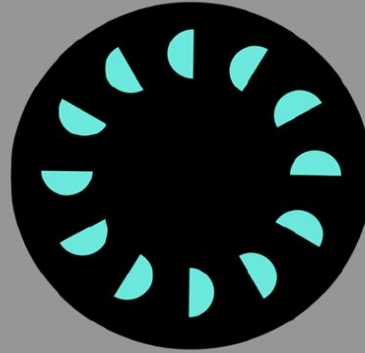


A paradigm shift



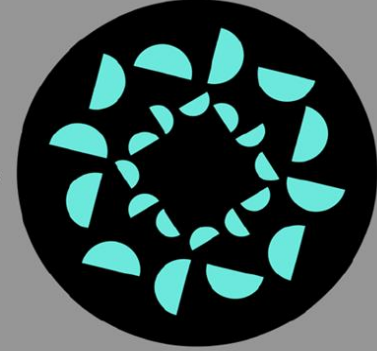
Extract

Deplete | Deforest | Degrade



Sustain

Reduce | Reuse | Recycle



Regenerate

Rethink | Restore | Replenish

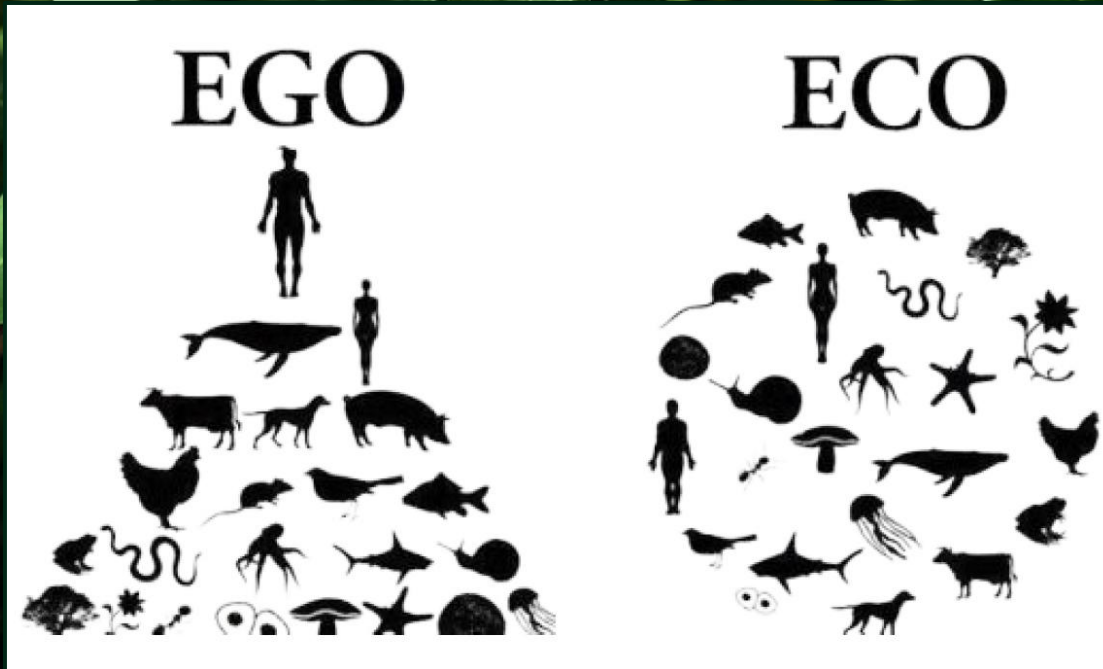
Source: RSA

Business as usual



**A life-affirming
future**

Regeneration & Ecological Justice



“Creating regenerative systems is not simply a technical, economic, ecological or social shift: it has to go hand-in-hand with an underlying shift in the way we think about ourselves, our relationships with one another and life as a whole.”

- Daniel Wahl

“The Great Unraveling” “The Polycrisis” “The Triple Planetary Crisis”

- Social-economic-political-ecological inequities, chaos & collapse
- Prioritization of:
 - Growth
 - Efficiency
 - Separation
 - Individualism
 - Hierarchy
 - Homogenization
- Advancement of extractive & exploitative systems, institutions and ways of being
- Widespread and multi-leveled disconnection from self, from other humans, and from the more-than-human world

Sudanese refugees in Chad scramble to survive



The Emotional Impact of the Israel-Gaza Conflict on Jewish and Palestinian Americans



Climate activists protested at Burning Man. Then the climate itself crashed the party

Biodiversity loss: 37,000 ‘alien species’ introduced by human activities, says report

This summer was the hottest on record across the Northern Hemisphere, the U.N. says



Let's talk about eco-distress

Climate anxiety → **Eco-distress**

Climate change → **Global environmental change**



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

“Paying attention” by Pia Guerra, The New Yorker, 2018

A Non-Pathologizing Approach

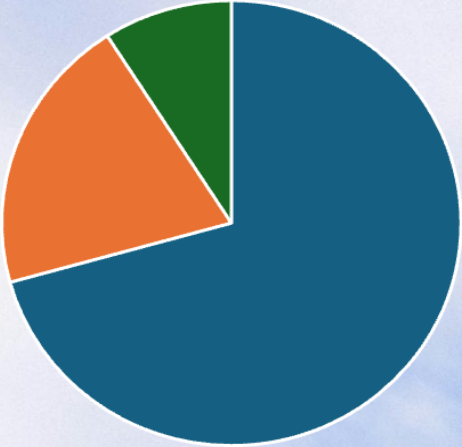
*****Eco-emotions are not problems – they can help us react to the problems. The emotions are not the problem – the eco-crisis is the problem.*****

A Look at 199 DU Student Perspectives on Global Environmental Change

Data collected September 2023-May 2024

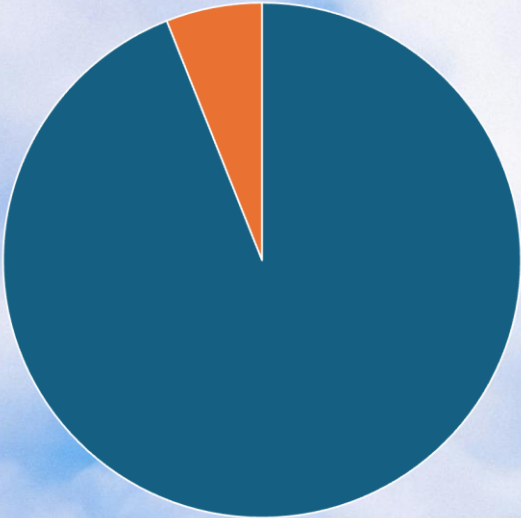
Average age = 23 (range 18-57)

Diverse majors

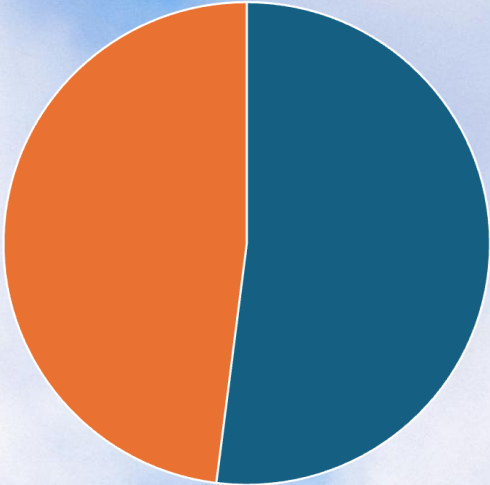


■ Woman ■ Man ■ Non-Binary

People have failed to take care of the planet.

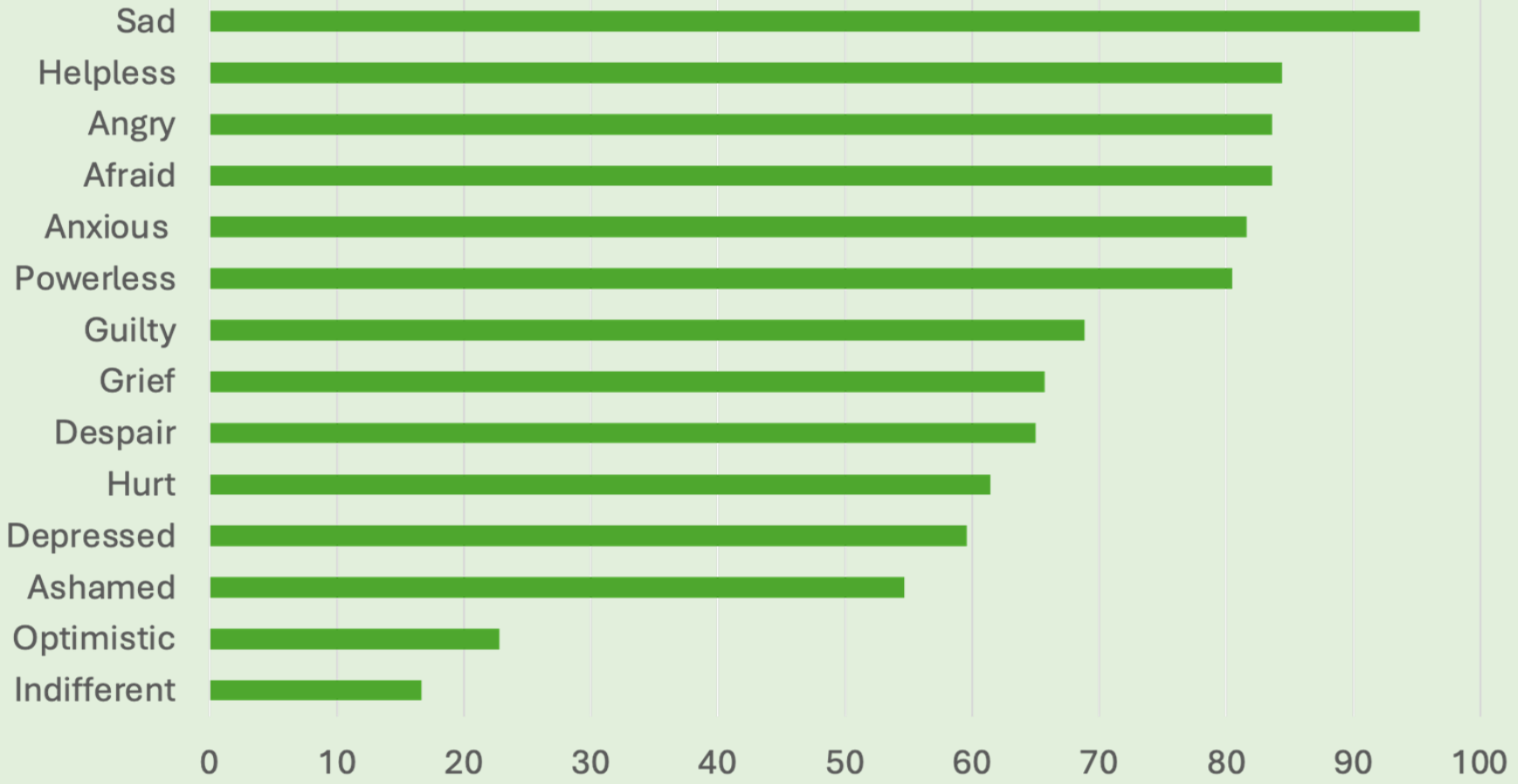


■ Yes ■ No

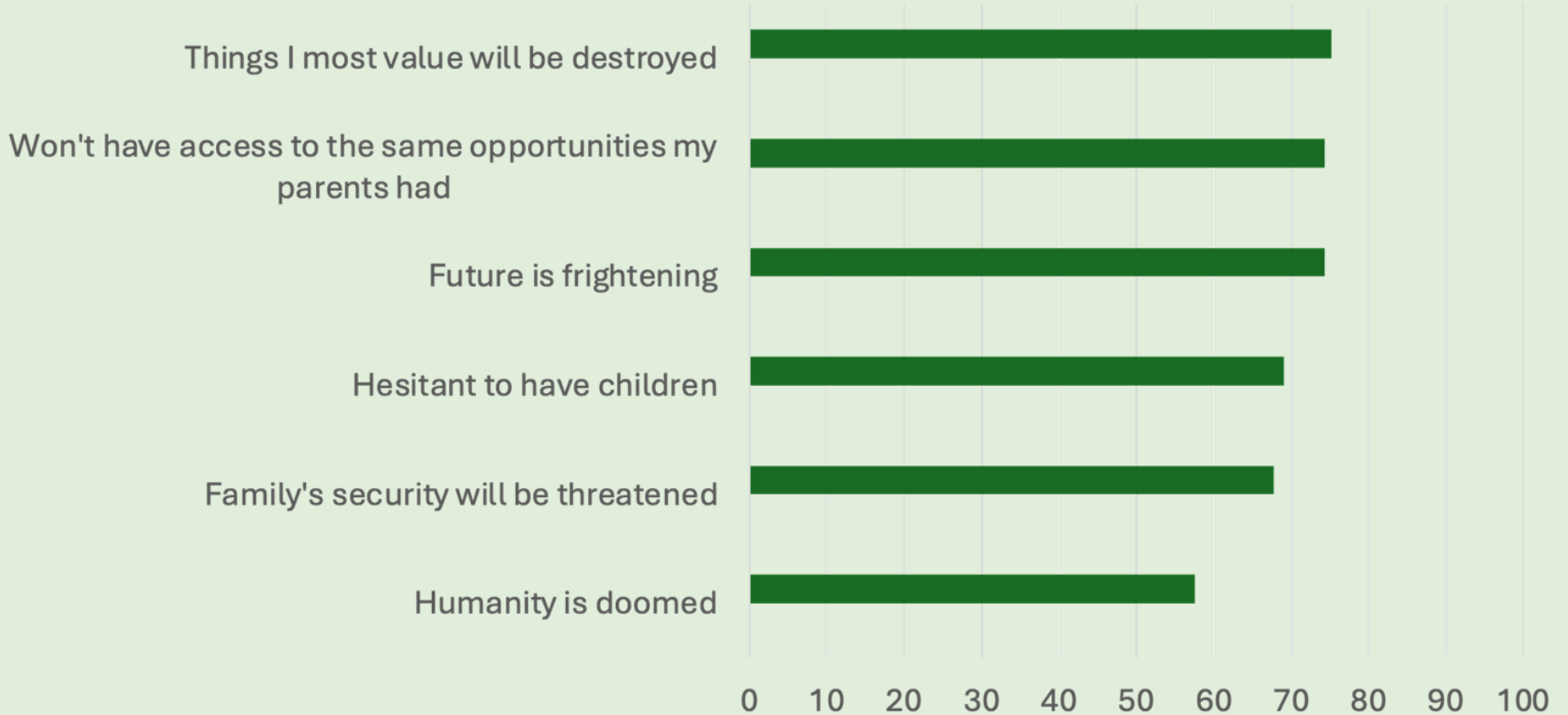


■ Undergraduate ■ Graduate

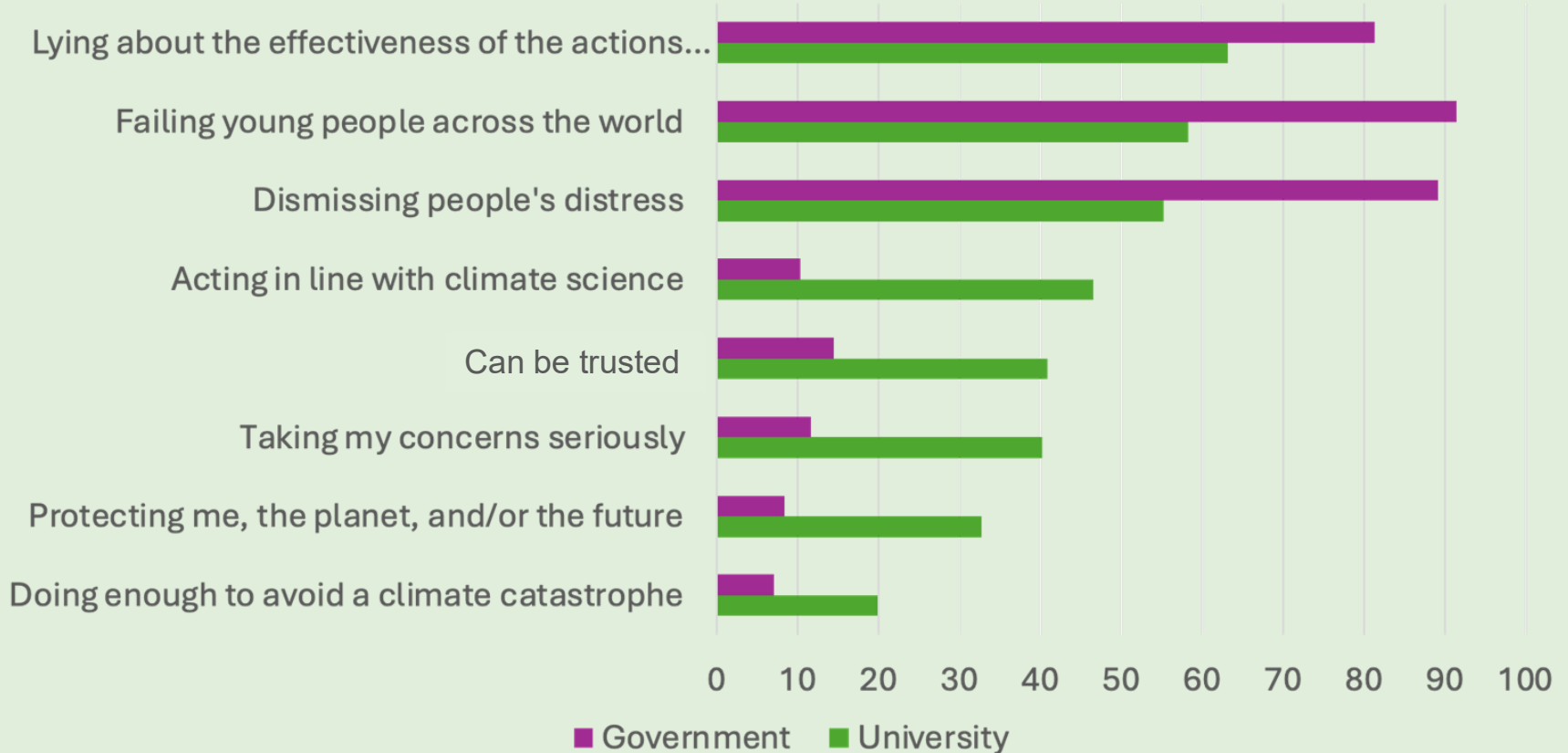
% Students Who Say They Feel:



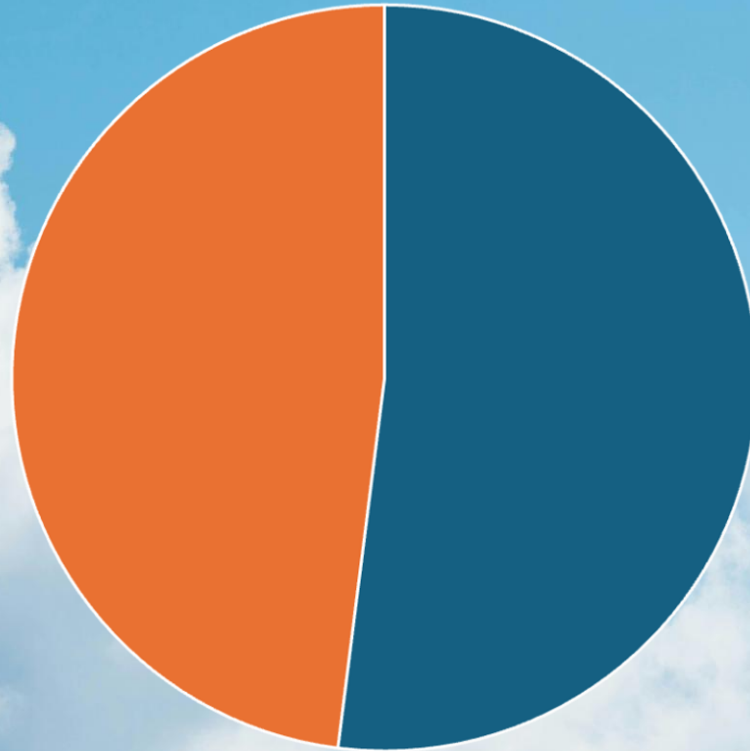
Beliefs about the Future: % of Students Who Say Yes:



Beliefs about Government and University Action: % of Students Who Say Yes:



Do you feel that global environmental change has affected you personally?

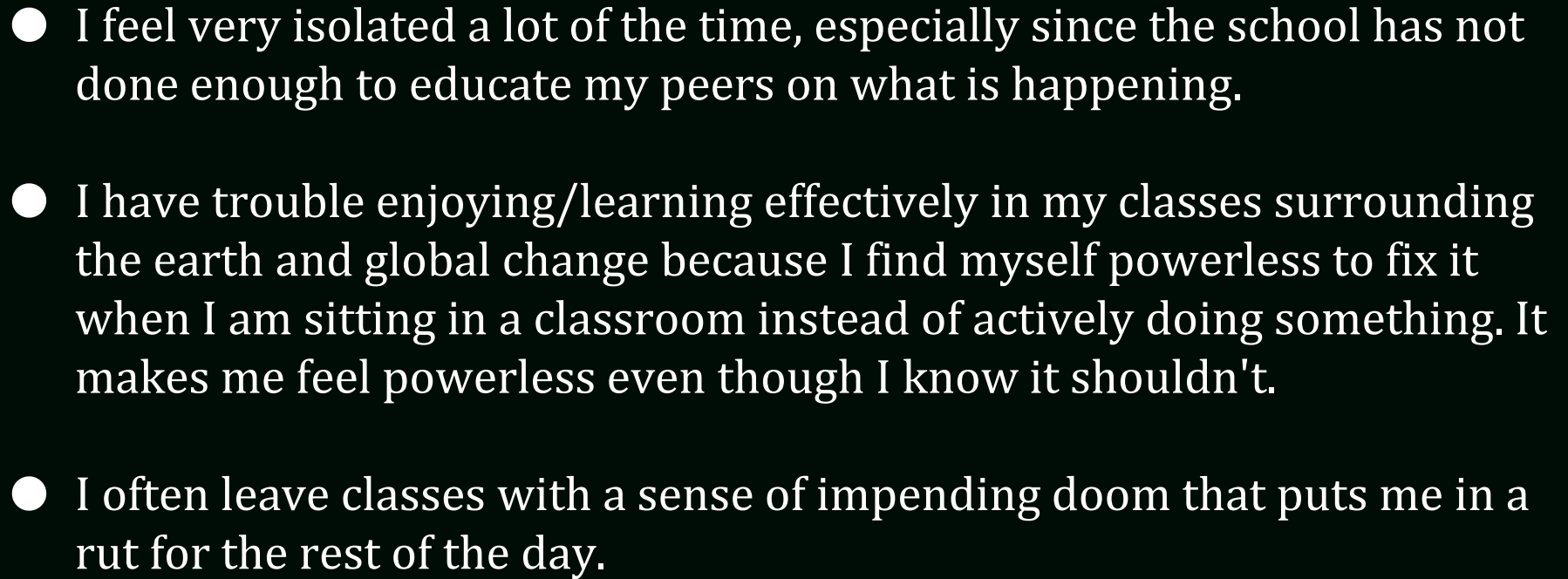


■ Yes ■ No

The background of the entire slide is a close-up photograph of vibrant green leaves, likely from a plant like basil or mint, with visible veins and water droplets. The leaves are layered, creating a sense of depth and texture. The lighting is bright, highlighting the natural colors and details of the foliage.

Please expand on how you feel global environmental change has affected you personally?

- It is a constant worry in the back of my mind that I'm not doing enough to help.
- A strong sense of guilt and shame loom over me since my existence is deeply embedded in processes/activities that cause environmental damage and capitalism makes it "my fault".
- I constantly am anxious that I won't have a world to raise children in.

- 
- I feel very isolated a lot of the time, especially since the school has not done enough to educate my peers on what is happening.
 - I have trouble enjoying/learning effectively in my classes surrounding the earth and global change because I find myself powerless to fix it when I am sitting in a classroom instead of actively doing something. It makes me feel powerless even though I know it shouldn't.
 - I often leave classes with a sense of impending doom that puts me in a rut for the rest of the day.



Wonderings...

(turn & talk)

- What are your colleagues and program participants experiencing in response to the ecological crisis? What are you experiencing yourself?
- What do these findings mean for the future of public health programming? Parks and rec programming?

How we support our community



Hope as an enabler of climate change adaptation

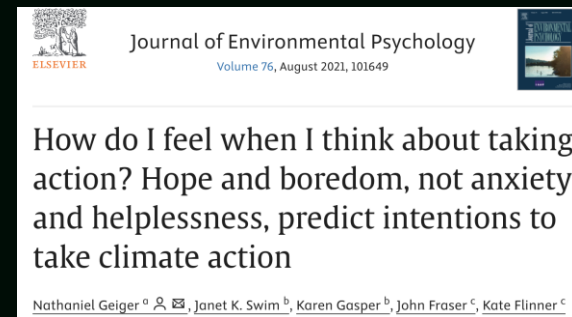
[Colette Mortreux](#) , [Jon Barnett](#), [Sergio Jarillo](#) & [Katharine H. Greenaway](#)

Hope operates through two mechanisms



Willpower = bolstering agency to pursue an identified goal

Waypower = enhancing knowledge of pathways to meet that goal



Reducing personal climate anxiety is key to adaptation

[Colette Mortreux](#) , [Jon Barnett](#) , [Sergio Jarillo](#)  & [Katharine H. Greenaway](#) 



Collective engagement & adaptation



Hope

Teaching & Learning for Regeneration & Resilience

JUNE 9 & 10, 2026

PRIORITY DEADLINE TO APPLY: MAY 15TH

Learn more
& apply:



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UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



What's happening at the Center for a Regenerative Future this year?

Staff & Faculty Opportunities

Regenerative Education
Community of Practice



Teaching & Learning for
Regeneration & Resilience
Workshop



Course & Program
Consultation



Guest Lectures

Student Opportunities

Paid Graduate
Fellowships



WELL 2700: Leveraging
Eco-Distress to Create a
Regenerative Future
(Winter course)



Regeneration
Mini-Grants

Opportunities for all DU Community Members

Plant-Based Community Meals



Climate Cafes

*An inclusive and supportive space to
share thoughts, feelings, and
experiences related to global
environmental change*

Learn
more

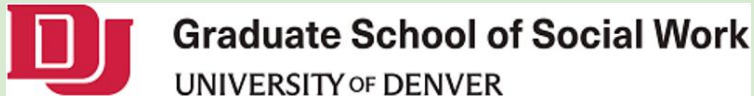


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Join us! The Center for a Regenerative Future promotes social and ecological justice by serving as a hub for developing student, staff, and faculty ecological justice scholars who are dedicated to creating a just, joyful, and regenerative future.

Coursework and Certificates at DU

- Leveraging Eco-Distress to Create a Regenerative Future undergraduate course
- Mental Health for Ecological Resilience and Adaptation graduate certificate
- Ecological Justice curriculum pathway in MSW program
- Eco-Wellness Living & Learning Community
- Sustainability major & minor





FUEL UP FOR FINALS AT THE DU

COMMUNITY DINNER

FOR INTERSPECIES JUSTICE

Thursday, March 12th 4 - 7 PM
in the Green Suite, CCOM 1100

Enjoy **free eco-friendly food** and learn how to protect the planet, people, & animals

LIGHTNING TALKS & ACTIVITIES BY

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
 INSTITUTE FOR ANIMAL SENTIENCE & PROTECTION | Center for a Regenerative Future

PRO ANIMAL COLORADO | Protego FOUNDATION | CLC | S



GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS



Climate Cafe

Join the Center for a Regenerative Future for a Climate Cafe.

An inclusive space to discuss your thoughts and feelings within community about environmental crises and the polycrisis.

Register via QR Codes



Climate Cafe Registration



Register via this QR code

February 5th, 3-4:30pm
February 17th, 3:30-5pm
March 5th, 3-4:30 pm

1100 CCOM
Green Suite
Center for a Regenerative Future

Questions? Contact
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Feedback and lessons learned from our programming?

- Having flexibility while planning for events
- Fostering deep, intentional connections with the community creates larger turnout and success
- Waiting to hear what students are bringing up in climate cafes, then responding with “teach-ins” and other event offerings
- Honoring slow, intentional work within a larger institution is challenging



Q&A and Discussion

How have you seen eco-distress show up in your setting (if at all)?

How are you already supporting your community members who are experiencing eco-distress?

How might you consider adjusting or enhancing your programming to create a culture of support around these issues?

Share your feedback
and/or request to
connect:



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Anna.Allegretti@du.edu

LESSONS FROM THE
CLIMATE ANXIETY
COUNSELING BOOTCAMP

HOW TO LIVE
WITH CARE AND
PURPOSE IN AN
ENDANGERED WORLD

"Books about social and ecological change too often leave out a vital component: how do we change ourselves so that we are strong enough to fully contribute to this great work? Active Hope fills this gap beautifully, guiding readers on a journey of gratitude, grief, interconnection, and, ultimately, transformation."
— Naomi Klein, author of This Changes Everything

ACTIVE
HOPE

How to Face the
Mess We're in with
Resilience & Creative Power

REVISED EDITION
JOANNA MACY &
CHRIS JOHNSTONE

Changing the Climate Story
from Despair to Possibility

Edited by
REBECCA SOLNIT &
THELMA YOUNG
LUTUNATABUA

A FIELD GUIDE TO
CLIMATE ANXIETY



KEEP YOUR COOL
ON A WARMING PLANET
WITH JACQUETTE RAY *

Megan Kennedy-Woodard
Patrick Kennedy-Williams
Foreword by Arizona Muse

Turn the Tide on Climate Anxiety

Sustainable Action for Your Mental Health
and the Planet

A POWERFUL READ THAT FEELS LIKE WITHIN, DARE I SAY, A HOPE!
—The New York Times

ALL WE CAN SAVE

Truth, Courage,
and Solutions for the
Climate Crisis

Edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
& Katharine K. Wilkinson

HOW TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IN A WAY THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

"The antidote to climate anxiety is action.
Make your first action reading this book!" —over 100 authors

REBECCA HUNTLEY

Not Too Late

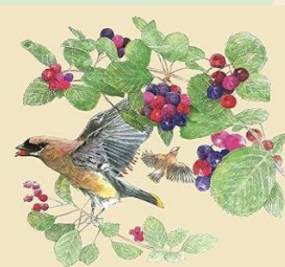
WHAT IF WE GET IT RIGHT?



EARTH EMOTIONS

New Words for a New World
GLENN A. ALBRECHT

Visions of
Climate
Futures



THE SERVICEBERRY

Abundance and Reciprocity
in the Natural World

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER
AUTHOR OF BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

HOW TO LIVE IN A CHAOTIC CLIMATE

10 STEPS TO RECONNECT WITH
OURSELVES, OUR COMMUNITIES,
AND OUR PLANET

LaUra Schmidt
With Aimee Lewis Reau & Chelsea Rivera

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