
A Research Study by Sabrina Smith, B.S. and Amanda Gaboritru, LMFT; Faculty Advisor Dr. Robert Dobmeyer, PhD

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Scope/Research Question

The purpose of this study was to examine how eco-anxiety surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic, Social Violence, United States government actions, and the 2020 presidential election may have impacted the mental health of the clients that are currently seeking mental health treatment at Evelyn Brandon Health Center. The research questions of this study are defined as follows: "What is the relationship between eco-anxiety and other stressors on mental health?" "What is the relationship between eco-anxiety and other stressors on mental health for clients that seek services from Evelyn Brandon Health Clinic?" The primary objectives of this study were:

1. Whether and how high EBMHC clients are currently affected by eco-anxiety, the COVID-19 Pandemic, Social Violence, United States government actions, and climate change

2. Whether clients at EBMHC are seeking mental health services or some other form of help for issues related to eco-anxiety surrounding COVID-19 Pandemic, recent social justice movements, United States Government Actions, and/or climate change.

Methodology

The research design for the study was the qualitative design, which is an in-depth exploration of a population of interest. The sample size consisted of 30 clients who sought help at Evelyn Brandon Health Center for problems related to eco-anxiety surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic, Social Violence, United States government actions and climate change. The study was conducted between July 2020 and December 2021. The data was collected using semistructured interviews to identify the causes of eco-anxiety. The clients are cited in the research for the topics they choose to share. The results are presented for the clients who choose to share their experiences. The confidentiality of the data was maintained. Consent was obtained from all clients prior to the interview.

Results

The results of this research showed that overall, 76% of clients had experienced some form of eco-anxiety, and 24% did not report any adverse mental health outcomes. When looking at the socio-demographic factors, 72% of clients reported eco-anxiety about the COVID-19 pandemic, 28% of clients reported eco-anxiety about the recent social justice uprisings, 22% of clients reported eco-anxiety about the 2020 presidential election, 4% of clients reported anxiety about climate change, and 24% of clients did not report symptoms of eco-anxiety.

The most common stressors that presented with mental health issues in the study were anxiety, depression, and stress. The average average of clients experiencing anxiety was 5.5 out of 7.5. The average age of clients experiencing anxiety was 27 years old. The average age of clients experiencing depression was 32 years old. The average age of clients experiencing stress was 29 years old.

Conclusion/Discussion

The results of the research showed that a significant amount of clients at Evelyn Brandon Health Center reported experiencing anxiety related to eco-anxiety within the past year, with the COVID-19 pandemic being the leading eco-anxiety theme expressed during the most recent year. Although clients did not report anxiety about the recent social justice uprisings and the 2020 presidential election, anxiety related to climate change was also reported. The anxiety that was expressed by the clients was related to climate change. The clients who reported anxiety related to climate change had previously expressed anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 presidential election. The anxiety that was experienced by the clients was related to their fear of climate change and the impact it will have on the future of the planet.

Implications

The findings of this study present that eco-anxiety is a significant health issue that needs to be addressed. The clients who reported anxiety related to climate change had previously expressed anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 presidential election. The anxiety that was experienced by the clients was related to their fear of climate change and the impact it will have on the future of the planet.

Literature

Eco-Anxiety from Illness and Disease

The definition of eco-anxiety states that the anxiety that arise from events that occur within one's environment. This can be linked to the pandemic, the United States government actions, and the 2020 presidential election. There have been studies that have examined the effects of illness and eco-anxiety on mental health from a disaster perspective. Appleton, Lim, & Wang (2014) found a strong correlation between the two factors. These studies have shown that eco-anxiety can lead to significant mental health problems, and that it is important to address these issues.

Some studies have found that eco-anxiety can lead to significant mental health problems, and that it is important to address these issues. For example, Appleton, Lim, & Wang (2014) found a strong correlation between the two factors. These studies have shown that eco-anxiety can lead to significant mental health problems, and that it is important to address these issues.

Eco-Anxiety and Politics

Some studies have linked eco-anxiety to both politics and political belief. However, some studies have found that eco-anxiety is not linked to political belief. This is because eco-anxiety is a form of anxiety that is related to the environment and the future of the planet. The environment and the future of the planet are not subject to political beliefs. Therefore, eco-anxiety is not linked to political belief.

Eco-Anxiety and Social Justice

The research has shown that eco-anxiety is related to the environment and the future of the planet. The environment and the future of the planet are not subject to political beliefs. Therefore, eco-anxiety is not linked to political belief.