

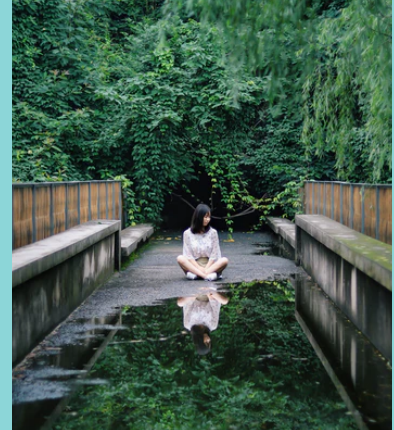
# PART 1:

## Climate Grief and Our Mental Health

# THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

There is a big and important difference between our intellectual and emotional understanding of climate change.

If we are familiar with the facts and data on climate science, we will be able to *intellectually* process the enormous consequences of rising global temperatures - sea levels rising, floods, droughts, food and water insecurity, forced migration and so on. It's clear that these facts point towards a bleak future.



These are also facts that are relatively easy to attain- with reading of reliable books and articles, and guidance from more experienced activists, we can access data on climate science. While some climate scientists continue to speak in a language full of jargon, many more, such as Kate Marvel, Julia Steinberger, Katherine Hayhoe, Peter Kalmus, Kevin Anderson and Michael Mann have conveyed scientific data in a manner that is simple and accessible.

It is far more difficult to process *emotional* and *psychological* responses to the climate crisis. First of all, it might baffle you to think that people carry on with their daily lives without giving any thought to the life of the planet- we're living in a climate emergency, after all. Our friends and families may also try to dismiss our worries, fearful of being infected by our bleak views.

There are also more structural factors- school curriculums rarely equip us with tools to navigate complex emotions. Witnessing the utter recklessness of our politicians is also infuriating and depressing in equal measures. Failing to act themselves, they glibly suggest that we should "chill out and watch a good old fashioned movie," instead of fighting for our future. Combine all these factors with the relentless stream of anxiety-provoking climate updates on our news and social media feeds, and it's easy to understand why so many of us are struggling to cope.

In this section, we describe some common emotional responses to the climate crisis. We provide a vocabulary, and set of tools, to help you make sense of your emotions, process them and reflect on what you have learnt, in the hope that you will carry it forward in your climate activism. Throughout the handbook, we emphasise that our advice is not a substitute for professional help- after all, we're in the same position as you. We are constantly learning new ways of engaging in climate activism, coping with our emotional responses and carrying on the fight for climate justice. This guide is certainly not exhaustive, but it's a start.