

# Climate Change and Its Effects On Mental Health

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Social Work Adelphi University

Social Action Project

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## Climate Change and Its Effects On Mental Health

In our Social Action Group 65 with Co-Leader: Kash (Kashina)Wade, Co-Leader: Irene Martinez, Lucy, Joliany, Alyssa, Lanette and Sulema. We worked together and created a Twitter account to drive awareness on of how “Climate change and its effects on mental health.” We created a social media platform to promote and host an online discussion event to explore social work and environmental justice related to climate change and its effects on mental health called “The Drive for Change 65” at <https://twitter.com/TChange65>. Creating this social media campaign raises awareness and inspires others and ourselves to recognize the issues of how climate change affects our everyday lives. Below are some of the questions the group researched.

### **What is climate change, and how does it influence our mental health?**

#### **Can extreme hot weather worsen mental health?**

- Extreme heat can worsen mental health in the following ways: problems with memory, attention, and reaction time. Extreme heat can also be associated with emergency room visits, such as mental health conditions like substance misuse, anxiety, schizophrenia, and self-harm. Extreme hot temperatures can affect the mood and cause aggressiveness and irritability. Excessive heat can also disrupt your sleeping pattern, exacerbating mental illnesses.

#### **Can disastrous floods, snow, rain, thunderstorms, and extreme cold weather cause mental health?**

- During the cold month, people stay inside their homes and are detached from everyday activities. This is called hibernation mode, which can increase depression. One of the most significant ways weather can affect mental health is winter Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is called winter blues and can cause depression.

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After a thunderstorm, it can cause losses, adversities, and life changes which can cause psychological distress, grief, depression, anxiety, and other mental concerns.

### **How does poor air quality affect mental illness?**

- Researchers have found that high levels of air pollution can damage children's cognitive abilities, increase adults' cognitive decline, and possibly contribute to depression. Air pollution can contribute to annoyance, anxiety, depression, and general dissatisfaction with life

### **How can we cope with weather anxiety?**

- We can deal with weather anxiety by limiting the intake of alcohol and caffeine. Take time out for periodic relaxation, meditation, and stress relief. Deep breathing and visualization exercises help and manage stress.

### **What are the psychological effects of climate change?**

- The psychological effects of climate change are more intensive: drought, storms, heatwaves, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and warming oceans can harm animals, destroy the places they live, and wreak havoc on people's livelihood and communities.

### **What is eco-anxiety?**

"The generalized sense that the ecological foundations of existence are in the process of collapse" or "a chronic fear of environmental doom" as per the American Psychological Association (APA).

### **What are the causes of Eco-anxiety?**

Changing climate and an upsurge in ecological catastrophes are to blame, which can be felt firsthand or through media stories.

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### **What are the symptoms of Eco-anxiety?**

The symptoms are terror and shock, panic attacks, nervousness, despair, powerlessness, guilt, fury, etc.

### **What are some things you can do to feel relief from eco-anxiety?**

1. Conscious breathing
2. Fact-check
3. Examine your lifestyle behaviors
4. Nurture yourself and develop resiliency
5. Increase your visits to greenspaces
6. Get in touch with individuals or communities with similar interest
7. Take a break from the headlines

### **What is environmental therapy?**

- Therapy that addresses the client's interaction with his or her physical or social surroundings (or both) in an effort to promote greater cognitive, affective, and behavioral health

### **What can we as social workers do?**

- As social workers, we are already engaged in many communities disproportionately impacted by climate change. We can and should play an important role in elevating the voices of the people whose concerns are not being heard and whose needs are not being met.

### **How common is social anxiety?**

- Social anxiety affected about 5.3 million people in the US. The average as it begins is between 11-19 years old. Social anxiety is the most common mental disorder.

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### **How climate change causes anxiety?**

- Warm temperatures bring the potential for severe storms. If summer storms worry you, your anxiety will increase, and along with it, anxiety symptoms. Being worried about weather events is often referred to as weather anxiety disorder

### **By how much had the earth's climate increased in the last decade?**

- These ten years were punctuated by a series of deadly, dramatic, devastating events. Hurricanes like Sandy, Maria, and Harvey fundamentally changed the communities they barreled into, leaving behind scars that have yet to heal. More powerful heat waves forced communities across the country and world into dangerous swelter. Wildfires tore up hundreds of thousands of acres in a flash.

### **What are some excellent ways to cope with anxiety?**

- Working out
- Reading a book
- Journaling
- Hot yoga/yoga
- Cycling
- Taking a bath
- Going for a walk/bike riding
- Coloring
- Getting into sports tournaments for fun

Our group met weekly and discussed climate change and its effects on mental health. Each member participating in research, creating google docs, questions, sharing our own opinions and

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how it may affect us. Developing the social media campaign and our Twitter site helped us to correlate posting, reposting, following people, supportive. We contributed to making highlighting stories and awareness of climate change and its effects on mental health.

### **Social Action Group 65 Plan planned a STARTER KIT:**

- Layout Plan
- Twitter Name
- Examples of other Mental Health Twitters pages
- How to make this enjoyable & relatable
- Target groups
- Culture differences in group (what are our likes, dislikes, age)
- Incorporating your style of SW services to attract others/change
- Do you want change?
- What is your interest (How to incorporate your interest and likes in social work and Environment & mental health in a professional manner)
- Make this a fun project -
- What does a social media plan look like
- Twitter plans look like
- Links to help people when we put information out
- Referrals to clinics resources city deadlines jobs therapy's
- What sources references are real facts and news
- Be relatable n Trends

### **Social Action Resources & Breakdown Project:**

Jobs and responsibilities

Research

Writer

Speaker

Participation

Break down requirements

Meet on FRIDAYS 7pm

### **Tweet Schedule**

Tuesday: Jolainy, Irene, Lucy

Thursday: Alyssa, Lanette, Sulema, Kash

### **Group Name Examples: (Subject to change if needed)**

- Pushing for change || The Drive For Change || StepUp For Change

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- (Playing around with some group names for our Social Action Group -Any advise helps)
- Hashtags - Viral - Tweeting - Algorithm
- Just some Twitter verbiage -
- Environment Mental Health • How does it affect You?
- What does Self Care mean to you?
- “I’m not depressed I took a shower and got
- Starbucks Latte, scheduled a message for later today” - I am not depressed
- Kanye West outburst are disturbing - How does this affect his kid’s mental health and their environment- Thoughts on Kanye West actions Kardashians
- “I don’t care” Social Anxiety Do I want to outside today?

Please join us April 8th, 2022, at 7pm-8pm. We are having a QA on Twitter in regard to climate change and it’s effects on mental health. At “The Drive for Change 65” link

<https://twitter.com/TChange65>.

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April 8, 2022

7pm-8pm

We'll be holding a question to answer session in regards to climate change and it's affects on mental health

Follow

@Tchange65

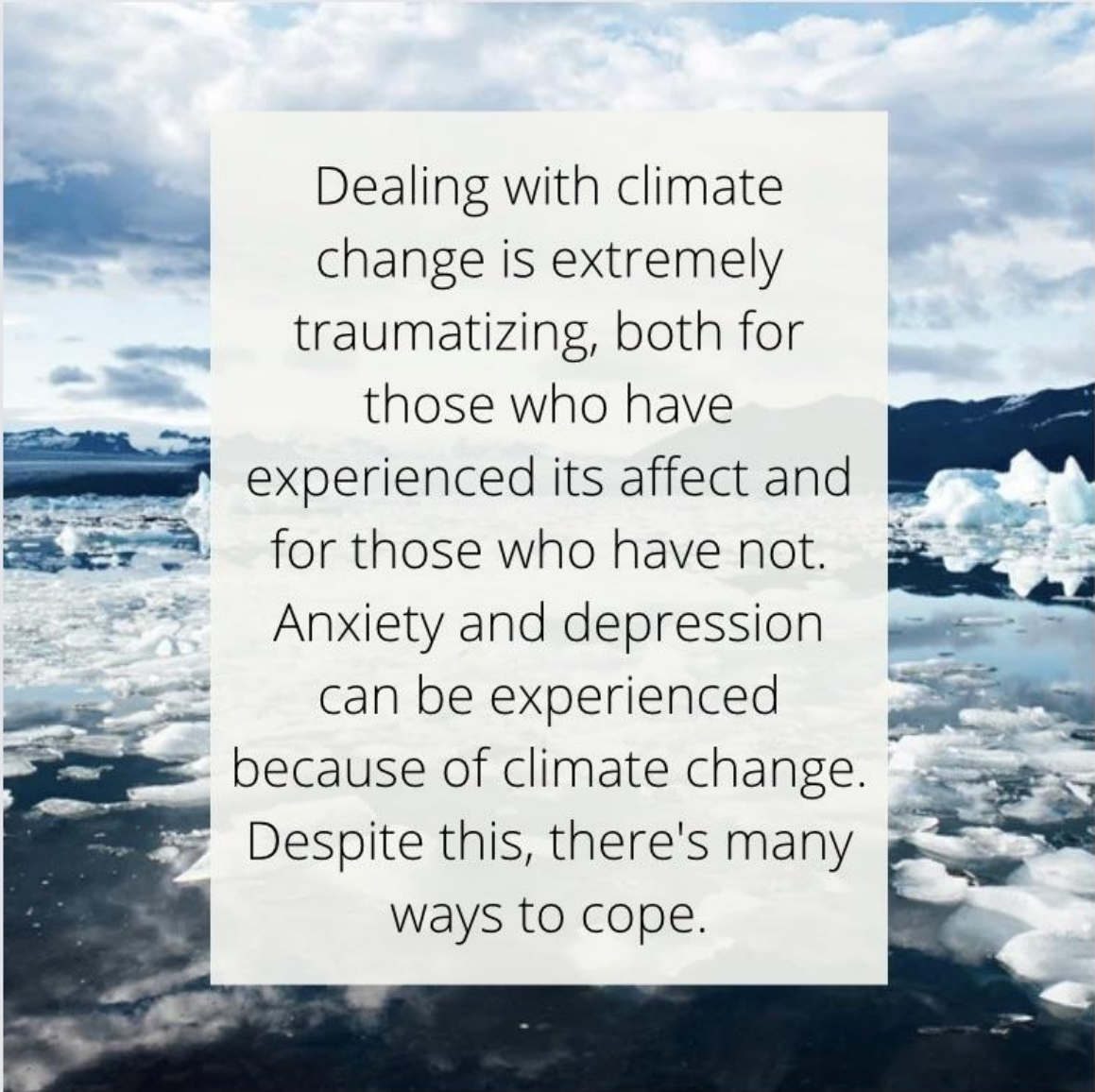
Hashtag us at

#adelphisocialaction65

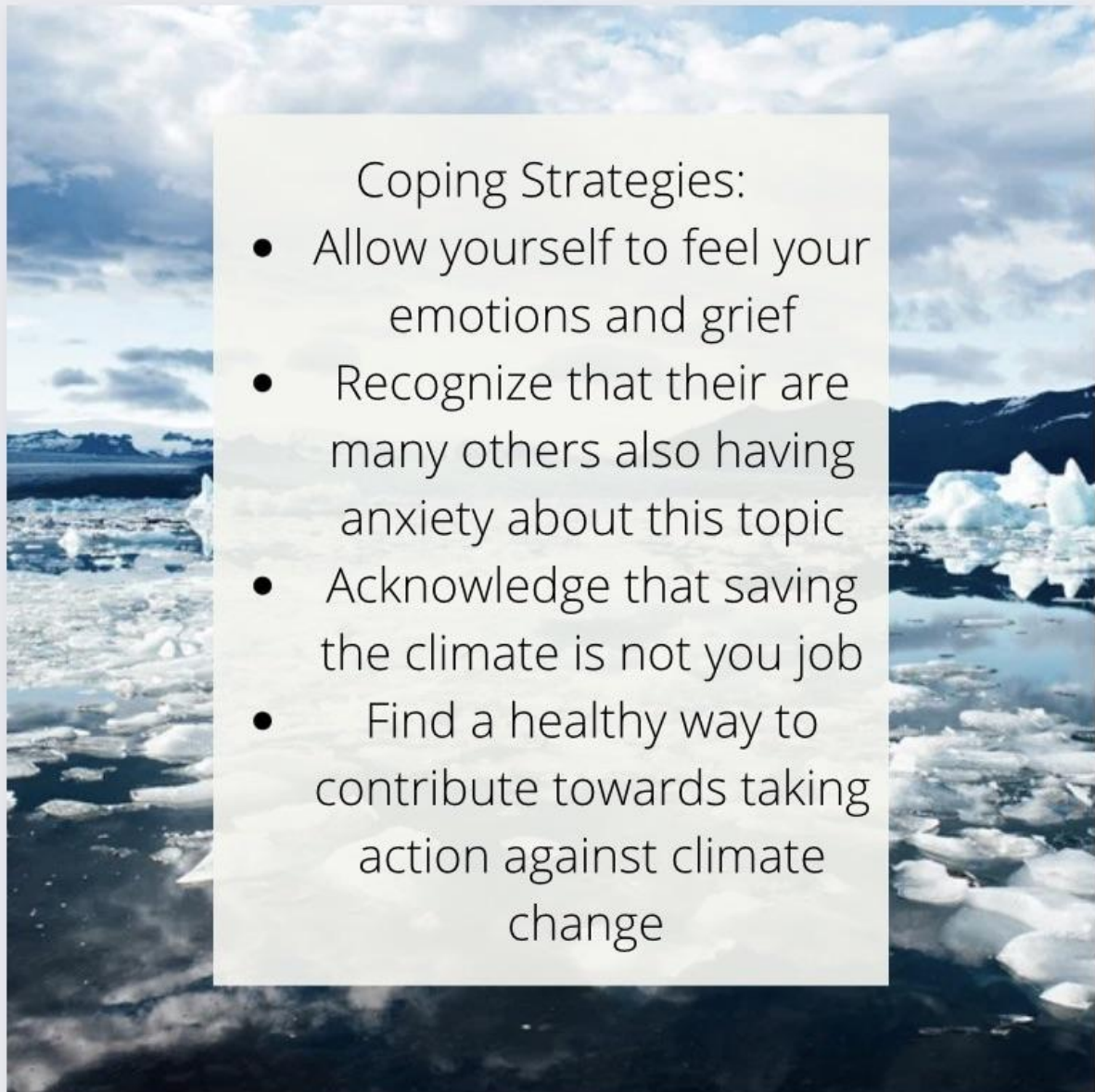
#mentalhealth65





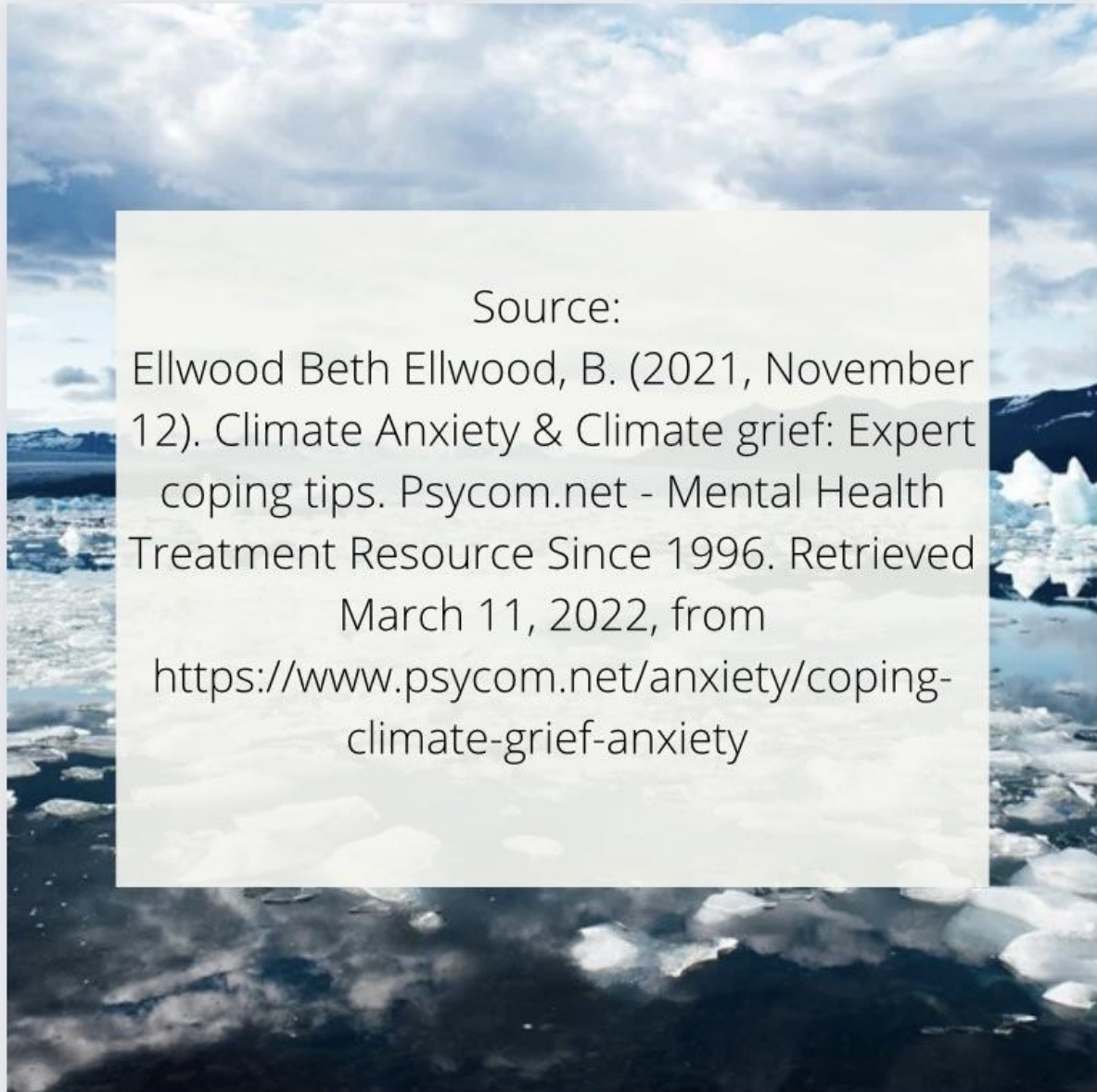


Dealing with climate change is extremely traumatizing, both for those who have experienced its affect and for those who have not. Anxiety and depression can be experienced because of climate change. Despite this, there's many ways to cope.



Coping Strategies:

- Allow yourself to feel your emotions and grief
- Recognize that there are many others also having anxiety about this topic
- Acknowledge that saving the climate is not your job
- Find a healthy way to contribute towards taking action against climate change



Source:

Ellwood Beth Ellwood, B. (2021, November 12). Climate Anxiety & Climate grief: Expert coping tips. Psycom.net - Mental Health Treatment Resource Since 1996. Retrieved March 11, 2022, from <https://www.psycom.net/anxiety/coping-climate-grief-anxiety>

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- Coping with anxiety about climate change can be hard. Fortunately, here's an amazing resource to help you find ways to positively handle this stress!  
<https://wellbeing.jhu.edu/dealing-with-anxiety-about-climate-change/> ”
- Canva post:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAE6srf-hFE/4RstvS8DNja88Tm9d3qbXA/edit?utm\\_content=DAE6srf-hFE&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAE6srf-hFE/4RstvS8DNja88Tm9d3qbXA/edit?utm_content=DAE6srf-hFE&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)
- [https://www.canva.com/design/DAE6tFKhBpM/sRAPVRzkaLg1tq8osZ9hnw/edit?utm\\_content=DAE6tFKhBpM&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAE6tFKhBpM/sRAPVRzkaLg1tq8osZ9hnw/edit?utm_content=DAE6tFKhBpM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)
- [https://www.canva.com/design/DAE7vcm\\_0Is/6D7uUI1zxv4WUPegDe1-A/edit?utm\\_content=DAE7vcm\\_0Is&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAE7vcm_0Is/6D7uUI1zxv4WUPegDe1-A/edit?utm_content=DAE7vcm_0Is&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

Please support THE EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY BILL S.1185-C The goal is to target waste products that result from packaging, shifting the burden of cost, associated with dealing with that waste from municipalities to producers.

Goal is to strengthen BILL S.1185-C:

- Eliminate all plastic in packaging
- incorporate support for reuse/ refill systems
- set goals for reducing packaging by type of material used and volume.
- set design standards for packaging reduction

**Reference:**

<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/climate-change-mental-health#block-a4738e21-e854-4f17-a9bb-9c3786dbfdd1>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/climate-change-impact-on-mental-health-goes-beyond-anxiety-5211209>

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/climate-change-mental-health-toll/story?id=77926778>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/10/07/climate-change-in-bangladesh-impact-on-infectious-diseases-and-mental-health>

<https://time.com/6112146/climate-anxiety-resources/>

<https://inhabitat.com/managing-mental-health-and-climate-anxiety/?amp>

Can extreme heat worsen Mental Health? #climate change #global warming #Heat exhaustion# sleep deprivation #mood swings # Heat= Aggression

During the summer months the emergency rooms have an increase rate of people coming in for mental illness reasons like, mood and anxiety disorders, substance use disorders schizophrenia and suicide risk.

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/mental-health-heat-5221192>

Disastrous floods, snow, rain and extreme weather can cause mental illness.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190905080114.htm#:~:text=People%20with%20homes%20damaged%20by,homes%2C%20a%20new%20study%20suggests.>

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/09/22/climate-change-environmental-justice/>

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