FACT SHEET SERIES | CLIMATE CHANGE & HEALTH

REGIONAL OUTCOMES MONITORING
a community health network for the capital region

MENTAL HEALTH & RESILIENCE

WHO ARE WE? This fact sheet was created by the CRD Community Health Network*. We are a multi-sectoral health network committed to **building and sustaining healthy communities** through facilitating discussion and catalyzing action around the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health and wellness.
*also known as the Regional Outcomes Monitoring Group

34%
of residents on South Vancouver Island have a **mood and/or anxiety disorder***.
*age standardized, both genders
Source: Chronic Disease Dashboard, BCCDC, n.d.

Climate change can impact our mental health. Eco-anxiety tends to **impact children, older adults, people with pre-existing mental health conditions** and individuals with **fewer economic resources.**
Source: Canadian Psychology Association, 2020

The mental health of individuals can be altered by the built environment. There is strong evidence that the **availability of natural spaces supports mental health and wellbeing.**
Source: Beemer et al., 2019   Source: BCCDC, 2019

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH

42% WOMEN 27% MEN

Women are **disproportionately impacted** by mood and anxiety disorders, compared to men.
Source: Chronic Disease Dashboard, BCCDC, n.d.

HOWEVER

in 2018 in BC, **males accounted for 74% of suicide deaths**
Source: BC Coroners Service, 2008-2018

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is our ability to respond and adapt to change in ways that are pro-active, that build local capacity, and that ensure essential needs are met.
Source: Strengthening Neighborhood Resilience, 2013

SENSE OF BELONGING IN CRD

% of residents who feel a strong sense of belonging

63% 71% 81% 61%

- ■ Victoria
- ■ Saanich/Peninsula
- ■ Southern Gulf Islands
- ■ Western Communities
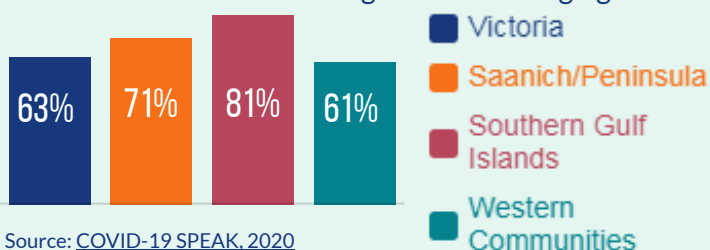
Source: COVID-19 SPEAK, 2020

WHAT IS ECO-ANXIETY?

Eco-anxiety is becoming a common impact of climate change on mental health. It may be understood as the anxiety and fear people face due to the looming threats associated with the climate crisis. The American Psychological Association describes it as "*a chronic fear of environmental doom*".
Source: APA, 2017, Hayes et al., 2018

INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

First Nations communities are threatened by changes in climate. They are also essential drivers in effective climate change action through their: **ecological knowledge and authority and deep responsibilities to traditional lands and waters**.

CONNECTION TO NATURE AND YOUTH

Only 46% of South Vancouver Island students **grades 7-12** say they **often or always felt connected to nature.**
Source, McCreary Centre Society, 2018

COVID 19 IMPACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

47% of survey respondents* in South Vancouver Island felt a **decline in their mental health** due to COVID-19.
Source: COVID-19 SPEAK, 2020

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONNECTION

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Social connectedness improves mental health, can be both a protective factor, a curative factor and build resilience. Social support can help buffer adverse effects of a stressful life circumstance or an adverse event.
Source: Plan H, 2018; Saeri et al., 2018

Social isolation and having fewer social ties are associated with depression, anxiety and cognitive decline.
Source: CMHA, 2020

Well planned designs which include **green space, common space, and are nearby services** can help facilitate **community connections** and **build trust**. People are more likely to meet and **talk to neighbours** if there is a desirable place to spend outdoors
Source: Township of Esquimalt, 2019

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Increase social protection and **decrease marginalization of vulnerable groups b**y facilitating or supporting programs which build community connection, some populations of interest may be seniors or newcomers.
Source: Hayes et al., 2018; Watts et al., 2015

How you **design spaces** encourages social connection:

- add community gardens, pet friendly parks, or green/picnic space. **Green space** provides "*co-benefits for improving both human health and climate resilience*".
- prioritize **active transportation**
- consider the **safety** of spaces - perception of safety may influence how you spend your time, live, and travel
- **Placemaking** is rooted in community based participation and can improve a community's social and ecological situation through planning design, management and programming of shared use spaces

Source: BCCDC, 2018; Barron et al., 2019; Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, n.d.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

In municipal plans include goals or strategies relating to social connectedness and belonging such as the City of Victoria's My Great Neighborhood Grant or the Growing in the City initiative.

Another local example is **Township of Esquimalt's block party kit** which includes suggestions, tables, chairs, signage.

Address psychosocial wellbeing in climate change resilience plans. **District of Saanich's Climate Action plan** aims to improve the resilience of ecosystems which can bring mental health and social benefits.
Source: District of Saanich, 2020

Encourage **intergenerational dialogue**. These exchanges can **transmit wisdom** to young people and also promote legacy thinking such as about **climate change among elders.**
Source: Frumkin et al., 2012

While climate change affects us all, groups that are already at a disadvantage due to **structural inequities** are more vulnerable and may have fewer resources to respond to the negative impacts of climate change on their physical and social environments.
Source: NCCDC, 2018

If you are looking for more information on the **data and resources** listed in this fact sheet OR if you would to **join the health network**, please contact **Kirsten Mah**, CRD Community Health Network Coordinator, at kmah@crd.bc.ca or 250-360-3174.

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