BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

A TOOLKIT TO CONVERT ECO-ANXIETY TO ECO-ACTION

J. Selena Leon & Patricia Ferrero

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ABOUT CONSERVATION COLORADO & PROTÉGETE

At Conservation Colorado and Protégete, we believe every person across our state deserves to live in a thriving community free of pollution – where everyone, regardless of language, race, class, immigration status, or political power, can have access to a stable climate and a healthy environment with clean water, air, and land.

The Climate Justice Leadership Academy is an initiative of Conservation Colorado dedicated to building Latinx, BIPOC, and intergenerational leadership and power. We're fighting to make Colorado a national leader in climate action, conservation, and environmental justice.

Because when we protect our Madre Tierra, we protect our gente.

WE BUILD POWER WITH COMMUNITY

Lasting change comes from education, self-determination, creating authentic relationships, and community-driven resiliency projects.

WE SUPPORT COMMUNITY LEADERS

We are building an environmental movement that prioritizes Latinx issues and puts Latinx leadership at the forefront.

WE MOBILIZE AND ADVOCATE

We work to change laws and policies to ensure that our climate, air, land, water, and communities are healthy and safe today, and for future generations.

LETTERS FROM THE TEAM

As a Protégete fellow, my goal is to create an educational resource highlighting the connection between our mental health and our environment, to support the important work of the Climate Justice Leadership Academy.

Growing up between two states that had vastly different resources and protections for their communities and natural spaces, I could see and feel how it shaped individual, social, cultural, and systemic factors that impacted people's mental health and well-being. Those factors also often overlap, creating injustices that are intersectional, demonstrating the need for solutions rooted in collective liberation for ourselves and for our earth.

The Protégete team and I worked hard to create a resource that would be useful to you no matter where you are in your activism journey. I hope this toolkit can provide you with new knowledge and tools for your overall well being.

I am hyped to be able to use this toolkit as a resource for our communities to be able to continue to grow our knowledge and actions together!

- J. Selena Leon, MPH,
Protégete Fellow

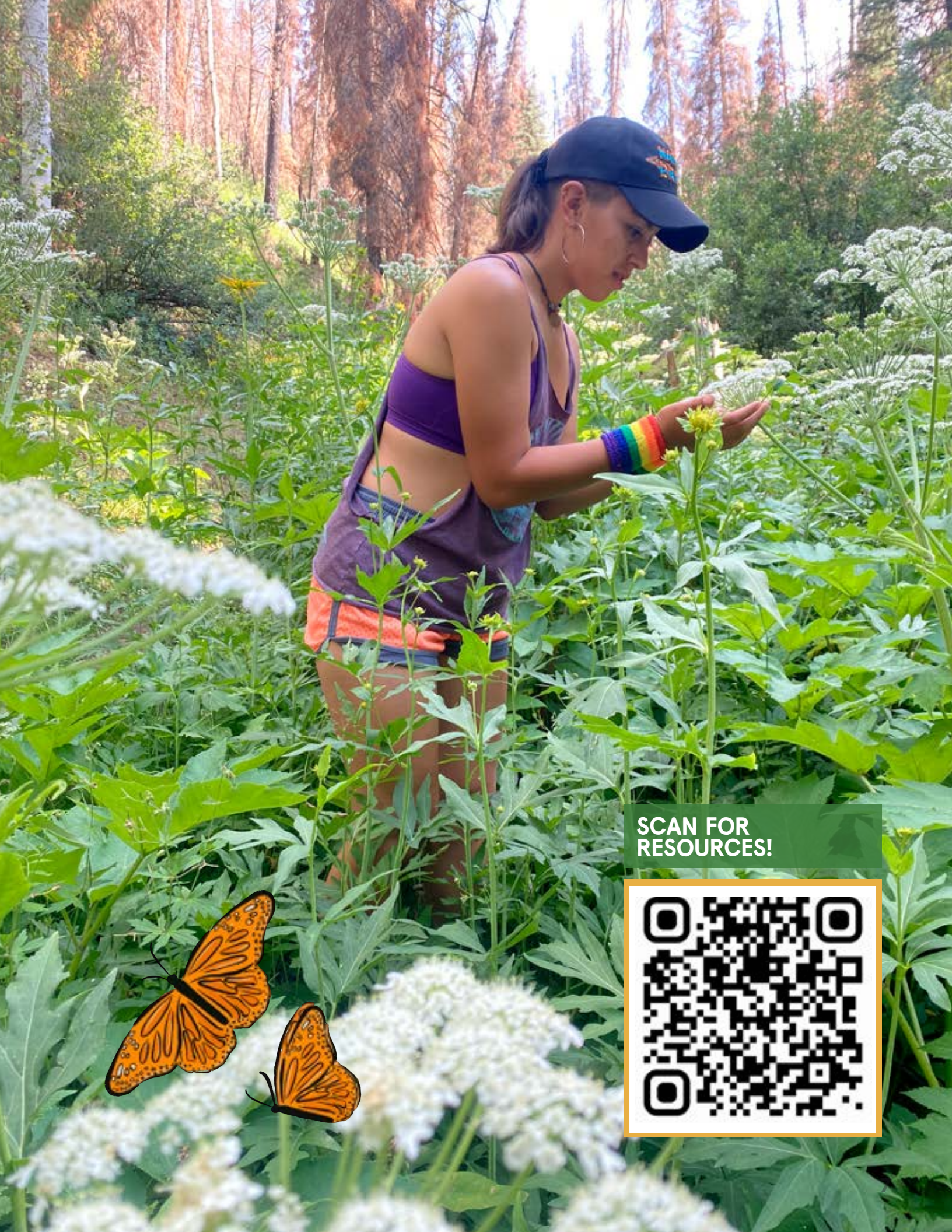
As the daughter of immigrants and a Latina in LA County, I grew up with anxiety about my own survival, not knowing that many of these stressors were caused by the intersections of environmental racism. The lack of green space, the heavy traffic, the proximity to a freeway and an oil field, the gang violence, all indicated that we were expendable. No one said it, but they didn't have to; we knew it to our core. We just didn't have the vocabulary to name it.

With this toolkit we hope to provide the vocabulary so that your *testimonio* – your stories – can be valued as a tool for creating change. Our communities are intentionally excluded from conversations about climate change, but we have the solutions. Our voices matter.

Our stories are tools for change that allow others to connect through our shared lived experiences, and hold industries and governments accountable for the harms they cause. They are our strength, our power. We wanted to create this toolkit to acknowledge the power in our communities and the very real mental health issues our activists are facing.

We see you, we are here for you.

- Patricia Ferrero,
Protégete Leadership Development Manager


SCAN FOR
RESOURCES!

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is born from love. We are committed to each other, and this earth.

Combating climate change and tending to our resiliency is a daunting task. As activists we must create our support system to distribute the load of climate leadership and nurture each other's sustainability in the movement as individuals and as a collective.

This toolkit is a resource for those of us in the margins of dominant society, experiencing the worst impacts of climate change and often living the most sustainable lives. We want to honor our connection to the land, validate the hardships we've experienced, and create a safe space for our feelings to flow. Our ancestral wisdom of living in reciprocity with nature and our first-hand accounts of environmental injustice are just as valuable as academic knowledge. We must all be equal participants in the development of climate research and policy to ultimately create solutions that don't perpetuate an unjust society. There are no hierarchies here.

In order to cultivate compassionate relationships with each other and our environment, we must do the difficult work of acknowledging our traumas and working through them. We must lay a foundation of health and well-being to sow the seeds of justice and anti-racism.

The toolkit covers emotionally heavy topics, and provides background and definitions to aid in shaping your understanding of our political systems, social structures, and environmental justice. It also asks you to reflect on your personal experiences and connect them to the material. This is taxing labor. We cannot ignore negative emotions. Wisdom comes from healing. To care for ourselves and each other means to confront and heal our wounds. Tackling climate change and environmental injustice is not at the expense of your well-being. We do it because a healthy environment is essential for all of our survival. Our health is tied to that of our surroundings. Our freedom is tied to that of each other.

This is not a replacement for professional help. We are not therapists, but we hope this can provide gentle guidance and culturally sensitive options for your long-term mental health journey. We invite you to continue to do your research to help build the compassionate community you wish to live in as you grapple with climate change. You, and our Mother Earth, are worthy of love and care.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

"[T]here still aren't many people who look like me on public lands. Starting out, I felt like I had to prove myself, more so than the average newbie. Being new to the space and looking different than everyone else had me feeling extra careful to do everything right. For a long time, that dragged down my experience. [T]he conversation around public lands must move beyond inclusivity and actually become antiracist."

-Oliver Abdulrahim
Site Reliability Engineer

Before we dive into a discussion of mental health, we want to root this toolkit in a collective understanding of important terminology and the history that has led us to this moment in time.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.[1] By definition, environmental justice includes protection from environmental and health hazards, while having equal access to the decision-making processes, and a healthy environment to live, learn, and work in. In the United States, 40% of people identify as people of color and 51.1% identify as female, yet in 2021, 65% of all elected offices were held by White men.[2] While public perceptions assume Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are less concerned about climate change, communities of color in the US actually express levels of concern equal to, or greater than, those who are White.[3] The lack of representation of low-income, people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) people, disabled, and other oppressed voices, has resulted in a form of environmentalism that doesn't prioritize justice for all people and the planet.[4]

However, BIPOC communities continue to be frequently excluded or marginalized in environmental organizations and policy decisions, making them more vulnerable to environmental injustices and climate change overall. This also creates blind spots in the proposed solutions, perpetuating an

unjust society and exacerbating the impacts of climate change on these communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

In the US, race is still the number one indicator of where toxic waste facilities are located, making communities of color more likely to live near environmental hazards.[4,5] Toxic facilities often target low-income and communities of color due to the lack of resources and representation in government decision making.[5]

These facilities create negative impacts on the health of communities due to increased noise, odors, traffic, and stress.[5,6] Residential areas with disproportionate industrial and commercial activity are also linked to higher burden of mental health disorders and psychological distress.[7] Indigenous persons, people of color, and low-income communities experience more exposure to polluted air, water, and soil from toxic facilities such as landfills.[5]

Environmental racism is usually accompanied by many consequences, including socioeconomic adversity, political marginalization, racism, medical negligence, and academic disinvestments.[8]

The combination of these intersectional issues can lead to **weathering**, or the premature aging and death of people of color. These **cumulative impacts** cannot be extrapolated for individual scrutiny; the institutional discrimination and ideological perceptions that allow for inequitable policies, biased treatment, and oppression are at the root of environmental, economic, immigration, medical, and political injustice.

These issues are monitored, regulated, and evaluated by different entities. Communities are often asked to provide input and testimony at venues like the Air Quality Control Commission, the Water Quality Control Division, the State Housing Board, and the legislature to address the exact same problem, but through the lens of the specialization of each body. Change in policy is slow and frequently unaligned with the needs of the community. Additionally, policy changes may lead to retaliation from landlords, industry, and decision-makers, rendering action futile. Furthermore, these negative results may call into question the social worth of individuals living in these communities, leading to helplessness, depression, anxiety, and other mental health outcomes.[9]

"When I first moved to this area, I had thought I had the evil eye. My son started getting bloody noses. My daughter started getting stomach aches. Everyone in my family kept getting sick. But when I started knocking on my neighbors' doors I found out everyone had the evil eye. [Yo no soy yo nomás]. It's the whole community. We are really impacted by these toxins we are breathing."

-Lucy Molina
Commerce City resident and Community Organizer for 350 Colorado

PEOPLE OF COLOR:

HAVE SEEN

95%

OF THEIR CLAIMS AGAINST POLLUTERS DENIED BY THE EPA

56%

OF THE POPULATION NEAR TOXIC WASTE SITES ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR

HAVE

38%

HIGHER NITROGEN-DIOXIDE EXPOSURE

ARE

2X

MORE LIKELY TO LIVE WITHOUT POTABLE WATER AND MODERN SANITATION

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IS NOTHING NEW

Black Americans are often exposed to the highest amounts of polluted air, a known cause of asthma and climate migrations.[4]

71% of Black Americans live in counties that are in violation of federal air pollution standards.

Nearly **50% of Latinx people** live in counties that frequently violate clean air and ozone standards, and over 1.8 million Latinx people live within a half-mile radius of oil and gas facilities.[4]

Indigenous people in the U.S are the least likely to have access to safe running water, nutritious food, quality indoor air quality, and household plumbing.[4]

84% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities living in Los Angeles live within one mile of an area with high concentrations of hazardous material contamination.[4]

When compared to other racial groups in the United States, **Asian Americans** have the highest rates of cancer risk from air pollution exposure.[4]

REFLECT & CONNECT

Use these questions to start a discussion or use them as journaling prompts

Can you identify any forms of environmental injustice in your community?
For example, do you have access to clean and safe outdoor spaces, water, and air?

How would environmental justice change your life?
How would it change your community? Your state? Mother Earth?

SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

In our world, there are different systems in which we operate that contribute to the imbalances of power, wealth, and opportunity.[10]

Although there are many systems of oppression such as homophobia, ableism, capitalism, and sexism, which are also critical to consider in the context of climate change, in this section we will only focus on **systemic racism** and **colonialism**.

Systemic racism is a form of racism that creates, allows, and supports the unfair treatment and oppression of people of color through laws, policies, practices, and beliefs/attitudes.[11] Our governmental systems and structures maintain White supremacy (the domination of political & economic power by White people) through anti-Black and anti-Indigenous practices that expose people of color to health-harming conditions including: limiting access to jobs with liveable wages, safe and clean environments with good schools, and quality, affordable health care.

Systemic racism has a substantial impact on the foundations of our cities, such as infrastructure, development, governance, and management.[12] The legalized discriminatory practice of **redlining** that began in 1933, is an example of systemic racism that led to the segregation of

COLOR ME IN!

neighborhoods by race and class – regulating Black Americans to live in areas that received less government funding and increasing their proximity to toxic industrial facilities.

Although redlining is no longer a legal policy, the effects of the discriminatory practice still impacts cities and community health to this day,[12] including lack of access to nutritious foods, exposure to air pollution, and higher COVID-19 mortality rates.

More recently, poor and working-class people of color have suffered **gentrification** and have been pushed into areas that are commonly known as **sacrifice zones** – areas where pollution policies are not regulated or enforced.

The US was more segregated in 2019 than it was in 1990, a trend steadily worsening.[13] A study of 171 cities across the country found that there is not one city in which Black people live under equal conditions as White people, and that the worst urban contexts of White neighborhoods is considerably better than that of the average Black community.[14] Public transportation is disproportionately located in wealthier, whiter communities, despite these communities being less dependent on public transit.[15] Access to public transportation has the biggest impact on a family's ability to get out of poverty because it reduces distances to places that improve quality of life such as good schools, fresh food and supermarkets, libraries, parks, museums, and well-paying jobs.[16]

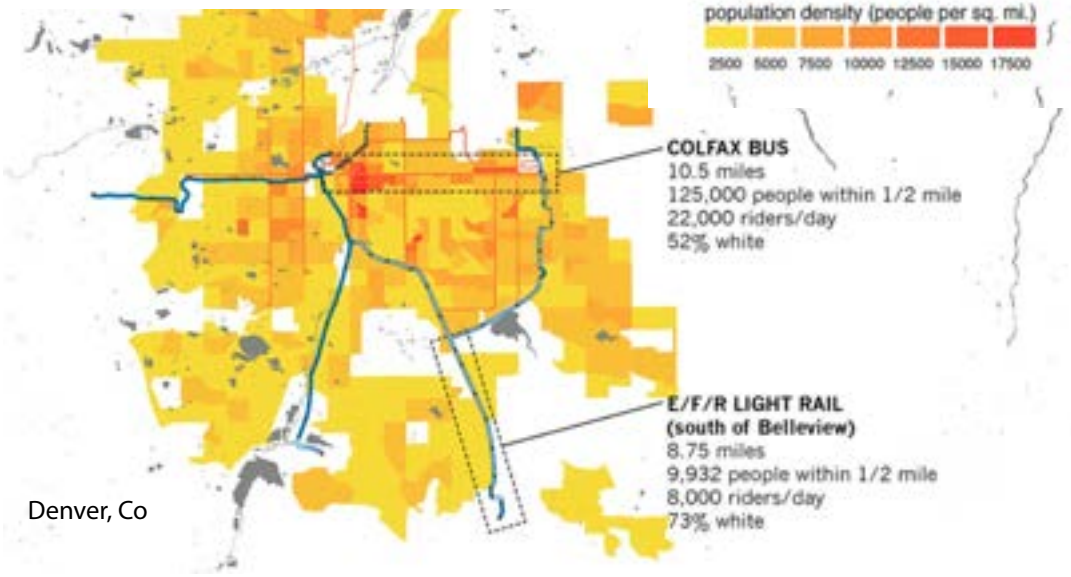
HOW DO POLICIES THAT ARE NO LONGER LEGAL STILL IMPACT OUR COMMUNITIES TODAY?

Temperatures in historically redlined neighborhoods are 12.6 degrees hotter than non-redlined neighborhoods, creating a **heat island effect** due to reduced shaded areas and trees.[2] The distribution of shaded areas, green spaces, trees, pollutant exposures, and access to clean water in a community are all influenced by our systems and structures, which are rooted in White supremacy beliefs and operate as intended to maintain inequity.[12]

- 43% of African Americans live in urban "heat islands," which are neighborhoods with fewer green spaces, diminished tree cover, and increased asphalt and concrete which retain heat and lead to higher temperatures.[2]
- Latinx individuals are also 21% more likely to live in urban heat islands.[2]
- 50% of Asian American communities lack access to tree cover, shade, and green spaces and 32% live in communities where asphalt and concrete cover over half of the ground.[2]

Dominant environmental narratives, controlled by White supremacy, don't often consider how systemic racism and environmental racism are rooted in colonialism.[17] Colonialism is an ongoing process occurring over multiple generations and includes various processes of forced Indigenous displacement through social, economic, and political systems in order for White people to maintain control and dominance.[18] Settler colonialism is also an ongoing process that violently disrupts Indigenous relations with the land and ecological practices. Colonialism is one of the main reasons why Indigenous peoples are among the first, and worst, impacted by climate change.[17] For example, settler colonial states like the US strictly enforce boundaries of the areas that have been assigned to tribes through treaties and reservation borders (Reibold).[18] When plants and animals migrate outside of reservation areas due to shifts in the ecosystem caused by climate change, Indigenous peoples lose access to species important to their lifestyle, health, and culture.[18] Threats presented by climate change impact Indigenous peoples' traditional ways of life and economies, making their communities vulnerable to resource exploitation.

In the US, 3-4% of the country's oil and gas reserves are on Native American lands – maintained and controlled by the federal government.[19] Cultural resources are often damaged by fracking activities such as drilling, while the physical and mental health of Native Americans is impacted by decreased water and air quality due to fracking activities. Climate change and colonialism continue to prevent Indigenous peoples from governing themselves and maintaining their traditional lifestyle practices, forcing them to live in environments most vulnerable to changing ecosystems. Addressing climate change issues means to also confront colonialism and create long-lasting sustainable change through Indigenous leadership and ways of knowing.



Denver, Co

REFLECT & CONNECT

Use these questions to start a discussion or use them as journaling prompts

How would you describe your environment? Think about where you live, where you go to school, where you work. Do you live near green spaces? What makes it feel clean or dirty? Safe or unsafe?

How does systemic racism, and colonialism affect the way you experience your environment and access to nature? What are some of the barriers or opportunities you have to connect with your surroundings and nature?

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A PERSON'S OVERALL HEALTH.

Mental health can affect the way one feels, thinks, and behaves.[20] Mental health is one's emotional well-being, including how they feel about themselves, the ability to establish and maintain relationships, and the ability to cope with the everyday demands and stresses of life.[3] Most people move up and down the continuum of mental health ranging from mental well-being to illness.[20]

The connection between climate change and mental health impacts is becoming more widely understood by scientists, researchers, and the public. While our climate continues to change at a fast rate, exposures to climate and weather-related disasters have been found to have serious impacts on psychological well-being, as well as negative effects on mental health.[3]

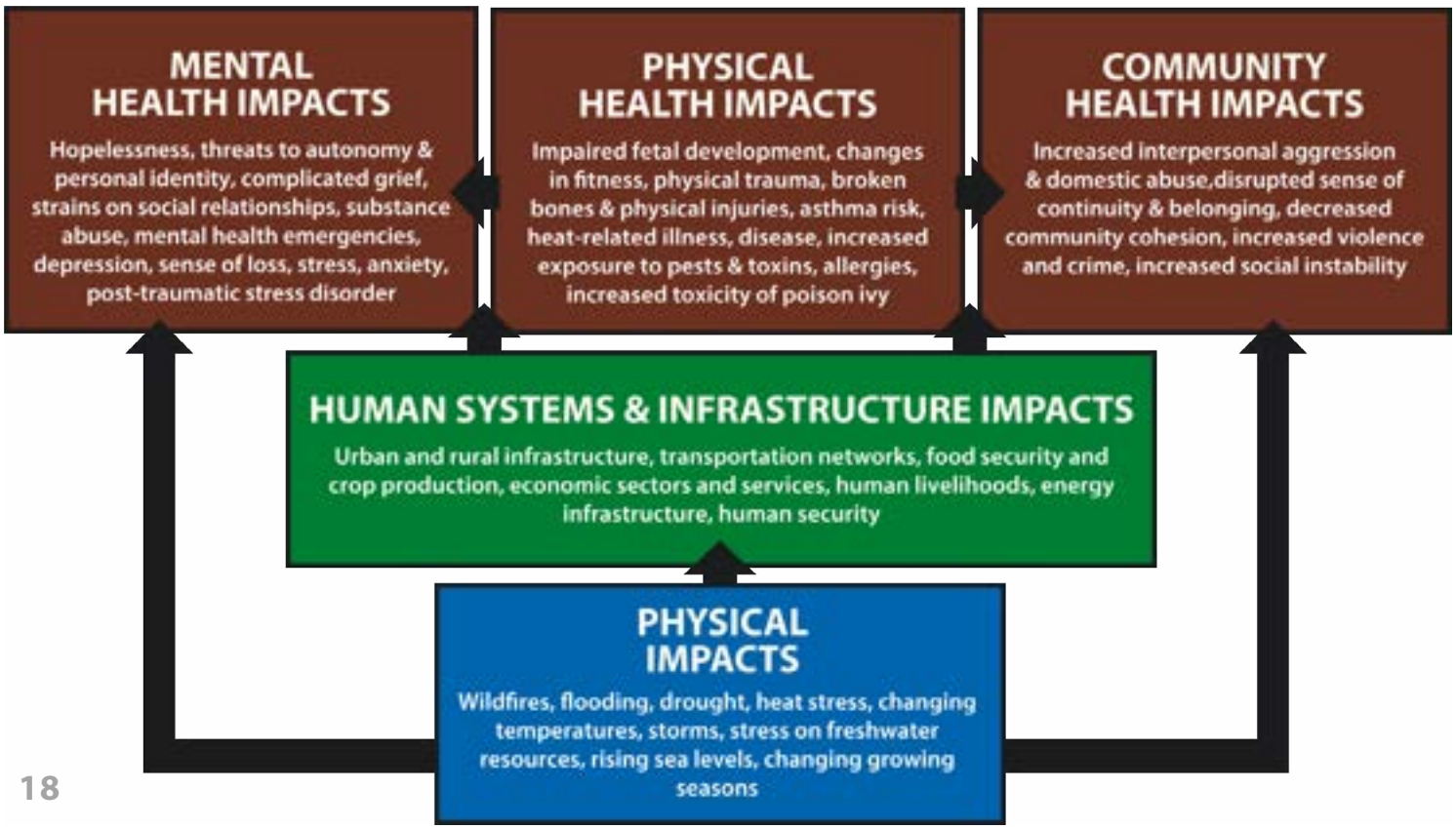
Research shows the most common mental health outcomes of experiencing climate change are stress, anxiety, and debilitating worry about the present and future damages of climate change.[3] 78% of adults in the US report that they were either very or somewhat concerned about climate change.[3] 67% of adults in the US are somewhat or very concerned about the impact of climate change on their mental health specifically.[3]

As climate change progresses, record-breaking temperatures are occurring more often and becoming a stress burden for our bodies and minds.[3] In the US, increases in temperature are associated with greater use of emergency mental health services. When temperatures are over 70 degrees Fahrenheit, people commonly report experiencing greater negative emotions and feelings of fatigue.[3] Extreme heat has also been linked to troubling mental health outcomes such as mood and anxiety disorders, and dementia.[3] Higher temperatures impact sleep quality, which

can lead to increased irritability and reduced coping abilities for people who already have some sort of mental disorder.[3] These mental health outcomes are much more likely to be experienced by BIPOC communities living in areas historically impacted by red-lining or the heat island effect.[3]

Other factors rapidly causing climate changes, such as the burning of fossil fuels, contribute to increased air pollution and impact mental health outcomes. Low-income folks and BIPOC who live in neighborhoods where air pollution is high and unregulated can have an increased risk of anxiety and other mental disorders, impaired cognitive functioning (e.g., memory, attention, decision making, and problem solving processes), and lower ratings of happiness and life satisfaction.[3] Stress reactions to climate-related threats can also lead to emotional suffering and lowered immune system responses, making people more vulnerable to the negative effects of air pollution or other diseases.[3]

The increasing occurrence of natural disasters such as major storms, floods, and fires due to climate change, create physical changes in our environment, forcing communities to migrate or become displaced.[3] Environmental refugees experience emotional distress due to losing their home, sense of community, personal identity, sense of autonomy, control, and ability to fulfill basic needs.[3] One of the most frequently reported mental health outcomes of environmental refugees is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a disorder in which people have intense thoughts and feelings related to their traumatic experience long after the event happened.[3] The mental health burden of being displaced by a climate event or threat is heavier for those who were already underserved by existing systems and infrastructure prior to the event.[3]



ECO-ANXIETY

A chronic fear of environmental doom; a sense that our ecological foundations are in the process of collapse.[6]

ECO-GRIEF

Grief felt in response to experienced or anticipated losses in our environment (such as loss of species), as well as the loss of place-based knowledge and identities.[21]

Alongside mental health impacts, experiences of ecological anxiety (eco-anxiety) and ecological grief (eco-grief) related to climate change are rapidly growing.[21] Ecological anxiety and grief can arise in response to climate change events, regardless of whether someone has experienced them directly or is just aware of the problem through social media.[3] Experiencing ecological anxiety or grief is not necessarily a symptom of mental illness, but rather a normal response to the threats presented by a changing climate and an attempt to cope with those threats.

However, if someone is struggling to deal with these emotional responses to climate change, their mental health can be affected, putting them at risk for depressive symptoms and poor mental health. Groups of people who rely on land and land-based activities for their living, such as Indigenous peoples and farmers, as well as young adults, can disproportionately experience ecological anxiety or grief.[21]

Those who do experience more severe forms of ecological anxiety and grief often have less access to mental health resources. Considering the impacts of climate change, it is important to identify and address the direct effects and consequences on human health, from damage to physical and social community infrastructure, and how some climate change impacts are exacerbated by systemic inequities.[3]

NATURE PROTECTS

All of these factors put a heavier mental health burden on communities of color, making them more susceptible to the mental health effects of climate change.[3] People of color who live within urban neighborhoods are often deprived of the mental health buffer offered by green spaces due to the heat island effect. Research has found that those who live further from green spaces or have low levels of green space near them have an increase in stress, greater risk of depression and anxiety, and overall poor mental health.[22] Access to green space has been linked with improved mental well-being, health, and lower psychological distress.[23]

Our relationship with nature, including how much green space we notice, think about, and appreciate in our surroundings, is an important factor of good mental health and stress prevention.[24] Nature, whether that's forests, parks, or other green spaces, can evoke positive emotions such as calmness, joy, and creativity.[24] Feeling a connection to our surroundings can also facilitate pro-environmental behaviors like recycling, buying seasonal fruit, and taking public transportation.[24] These findings suggest that increasing green spaces may have sustainable health benefits while developing a stronger mutually supportive relationship between people and the environment.[24]

The **One Health approach** to public health recognizes that human wellness is intrinsically tied to that of wildlife and our environmental conditions.[25] Therefore, it is necessary that we consider the health of our environment when analyzing our own physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Poor environmental conditions, such as pollution, are a symptom of a broader imbalance in our health ecosystem, and as we've discussed in this section, are bound to have impacts on us as individuals and as a society.

REFLECT & CONNECT

Use these questions to start a discussion or use them as journaling prompts

Is climate change impacting your health and/or the health of your community? How does your environment impact your mental health?

What helps you address, overcome, or process your feelings about climate change or eco-anxiety/grief?

SEEDS OF HOPE

"There's this template people often feel they need to fit to be considered an environmentalist. It's associated with being White and affluent. It's the person who goes out to the mountains, and has all the fancy, supposedly sustainable gear, and a hybrid plug-in Subaru, and recycles everything. That template is simply not true. If you look at the history of the environmental movement, it's been filled with Black, Indigenous, and Latinx leaders from the beginning."

-Aly Ferrufino-Coqueugniot
Political Director, Convervation Colordao

Our educational system often does not recognize the work of marginalized communities to provide us the rights we have today. The environmental narrative has been created by White men, when in reality BIPOC leaders have been at the forefront of fighting for justice. This erasure of the **activism** of our ancestors and previous generations is an intentional act of violence to rob our communities of pride in our identities, cause us to question our belonging, and eliminate the belief that change is possible. But all social systems are artificially created by people. They have been changed in the past, and can be changed again! Let's take a look at the work previous BIPOC activists have led in the environmental movement that have granted us the rights we have today, so that we can build on that momentum for a healthier tomorrow.

BIPOC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color are often erased from environmental history and education. Yet, they have always been at the forefront of community **advocacy** and environmental justice, with statistics showing levels of concern about climate change among BIPOC communities being equal or greater than those who are White.[3,4]

The beginning of the environmental justice movement is often traced to the 1982 protests of the disposal of toxic soil at a landfill in Warren County, North Carolina.[26] The primarily Black community of Warren County began organizing civil rights activists, Black political leaders and environmentalists, prompting a national movement that would eventually deepen

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our understanding of the relationship between race, poverty, and environmental risks. While this was the first Black-led environmental protest that garnered national recognition, the **activism** and leadership among Black communities began long before 1982 and has continued into present day with the fight for clean water in Flint, Michigan – a reflection of a long history of segregation and government officials' ignoring the concerns of Black residents.[11]

Indigenous people, the original and rightful stewards of the Earth, continuously confront and address the relationship between historical injustices and climate change.[17] Globally, Indigenous peoples are leading protests and educating on issues around climate justice and water protection.[27] Within the past decade, we've witnessed many different environmental justice movements come to fruition, including the 2016 water protector movement in North Dakota at the Standing Rock Reservation, where activists and community members protested an oil pipeline that to this day risks destroying cultural resources and water sources. Additionally, there are current protests against the construction of a telescope on the sacred land of Mauna Kea in Hawai'i. Indigenous activists are leaders in the social and environmental justice movement, succeeding in reducing the impacts of climate change while also combatting structural racism through strategic alliance building, powerful testimony, public policy interference, and intentional connections made between environmental regulations and tribal sovereignty and self-determination.[27] Language reclamation programs are also unearthing priceless traditional ecological knowledge encoded in Indigenous languages, including how we relate to the land, how we use local plants, and medicinal practices that can be used by our healthcare system to create culturally relevant programming and policies.[28]

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Latinxs and Asian communities have also contributed greatly to the environmental justice movement. A historical example of how solidarity is essential to making any movement strong and successful is the United Farm Workers (UFW) Union formed by Filipino and Mexican agricultural workers of Delano, California.[29] In September 1965, Filipino workers asked Mexican workers to join them in a strike for better pay, retirement benefits, and healthcare coverage. The Delano grape strike lasted for five years, finally ending in 1970 when the UFW reached collective agreements with their employers. The lives of over 10,000 workers were changed as they improved working conditions and ensured resources for future farm workers who face the impacts of climate change on agriculture such as high temperatures, heat-related illnesses, and reduced crops due to reduced soil fertility from the heat which can also affect workload.[3] The unity of Filipino and Mexican farm workers established the right for workers to organize and connected the struggles of working class people to the larger environmental and civil rights movements.

The activism of BIPOC communities combines notions of environmental sustainability and concerns of climate change with demands for social justice.[26] More than half (63%) of people living within the US say they feel a personal sense of responsibility to help reduce global warming and 61% believe that it is not too late to do something about global warming.[3] Together, communities are organizing against and actively resisting colonial structures, environmental racism, and climate change.

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REFLECT & CONNECT

Use these questions to start a discussion or use them as journaling prompts

What are some examples of climate leadership in your community?
What organizations or people do you know of working against climate change?

How are you involved or what actions can you begin to take to change the impact of climate change on your life/community while also taking care of & managing your mental health?

STEPPING INTO YOUR POWER

"Too often, the youngest members of our society are left without a seat at the decision-making table. We've been told that we are 'too young,' 'not educated enough,' or 'not mature enough' to understand the issues that we see everyday in our schools, our neighborhoods, and our homes. We're discouraged from actively engaging in our communities, stifling our collective voice and the positive changes that we want to make to improve our future. That still hasn't stopped today's generation from standing up together, raising our voices, and declaring how significant it is to be a part of change."

-Sara Penilla Montoya
Youth Promotora 2019, Protégete

Lived experience provides expertise.

The communities at the forefront of environmental hazards are the most well-equipped to formulate policy solutions that will address the root cause of these problems, despite our communities often being denied access to formalized education through these same discriminatory systems.

In this section we will explore how our communities are negatively impacted by systematic marginalization that still exists today and how we can reframe our thinking to uplift our leadership and reclaim the environmental narrative to center our cultural assets and worldview.

THE LIMITATIONS OF STEREOTYPES

Stories frame our understanding of the world, and provide opportunities for marginalized people to see themselves represented as authority figures in the environmental movement.

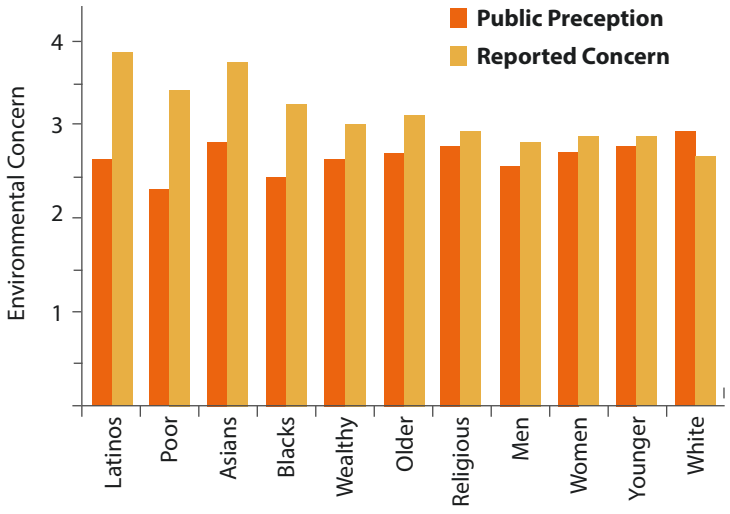
Part of the issue preventing us from reclaiming the environmental narrative has been the intentional exclusion of our communities from the conversation through stereotypes.

A 2018 survey conducted of Americans across the country found that Latines, followed by Asian and Black people, displayed the highest environmental concern, despite having the lowest climate

change public perception.[30] In contrast, Whites were the only group perceived to care more about environmental issues compared to their actual reporting. White men, specifically, are hypothesized to perceive lower risk from environmental factors, presumably because they are less likely to be in contact with these hazards – a phenomenon known as the **White Male Effect.**[31]

From this data we can deduce that BIPOC communities are more emotionally invested in environmental issues and often have the most lived experience to inform solutions. However, because of systemic power and public perception, traditional conservation outreach efforts and communication strategies have been aimed at targeting wealthy, White audiences – people with **dominant identities**, or identities that hold the most historical social power – while ignoring the people most impacted by climate change.[30]

These tend to be people with **subordinate identities**, or identities that hold less social capital, lack access to insider information regarding systemic structures, and have been oppressed and erased.



DOMINANT VS. SUBORDINATE IDENTITIES

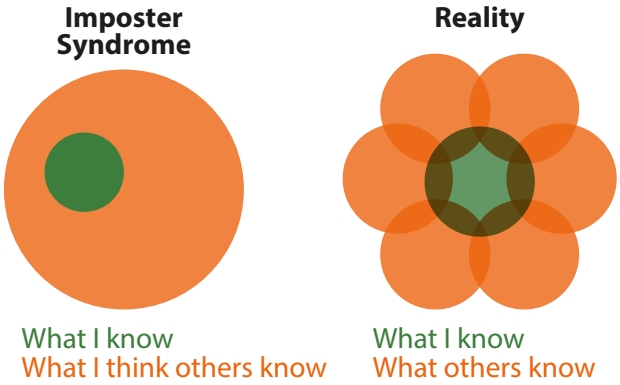
In 2000, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum coined the terms dominant and subordinate identities.[32] As a Black woman, she wanted to unpack the complexity of multiple identities and the social power they carry.

Dominant identities set the social parameters and are those for whom the system works. This includes being White, cis-gender, male, straight, wealthy, etc. Subordinate identities, on the other hand, are assigned by the dominant group as innately incapable of performing within the social standards set by the dominant group.

For example, the stereotype that Black people are less intelligent than White people, because the definition of intelligence was created by Whites to uplift their social capital and strengths, and achieving the goal has been systematically gatekept.

These are artificial socially constructed definitions meant to keep the status quo, and not a true assessment of inherent value. What examples can you think of for subordinate identities, and how has the dominant identity wielded its power to continue to oppress that group?

This public perception can cause people with subordinate identities to experience **Imposter Syndrome** – the feeling of being not qualified enough to participate in the conversation or take on a leadership role in solving the problem.[33] When we are consistently left out of conversations, there are real-life policy implications. The public, organizations, and decision-makers regularly overlook the concerns of our communities and ignore solutions we may bring.



Furthermore, we may self-silence out of self-preservation, to avoid the continued violence of being told we do not belong and are not knowledgeable enough to participate in the discussion.[9] We may doubt our intelligence or understanding of the issue because we are approaching it from a lens of our lived experience, instead of viewing it through an academic lens. This may be informed by previous experience, where our expertise has been undermined.

Additionally, the monumental effort to be seen and heard may not seem worthwhile because these efforts have produced no benefits, or have even led to punishment, in the past.

It is important to remind ourselves that our lived experiences are valid and informational. The best tool we have for combating these damaging narratives and barriers is to share our own stories.

TRAUMA OVERLOAD

Another barrier to activism for people with subordinate identities may include the cognitive overload of receiving constant updates regarding devastating news stories streaming directly to the palm of our hands.[34]

Never in history have we had this much access to information, most of which centers on overwhelming problems outside of our immediate control, such as climate change, gun control and mass shootings, police brutality and hate crimes.

These issues disproportionately impact people with subordinate identities.

The continuous emotional burden that comes with thinking about global doom, especially for people with less social capital and decision-making power, can cause compassion fade, or a reduction in compassionate and helping behavior as the number of those in need increases.

We become numb to the suffering of others as a way to protect ourselves from pain, but this does not come without a cost to our own emotional well-being.

This has devastating impacts on mental health, particularly among youth. Between 2016 and 2019, anxiety amongst children aged 0 - 18 increased by 27% and depression by 24%, indicating a potential trend in mental health deterioration.[35]

Furthermore, people involved in caregiving jobs, such as nurses and community organizers, experience a phenomenon known as **compassion fatigue**, an empathy overload that causes an emotional and physical exhaustion and reduction in capacity due to the repeated exposure to the trauma and suffering of others.[36]

This is sometimes referred to as vicarious trauma. Though initially observed among medical professionals, individuals that take on caregiving responsibilities with their families, friends, and communities may experience compassion fatigue as well.

People with subordinate identities are more likely to take on this role, as those who deviate from the norms set by dominant society are often ostracized and do not have access to necessary resources, forcing them to create their own support systems.

COLOR ME IN!

CREATING SAFE SPACE

Safe space and affinity groups have been historically used to protect folks with invisible identities who cannot count on our systems to prioritize their needs.

Because our structures of power have been built under colonialism and White supremacy culture, having subordinate identities often means that your needs are not only ignored, but may actively put your life in danger.

Individuals with subordinate identities may be forced to hide certain parts of who they are, or run away from home to avoid discrimination and violence. Safe space -- whether at school, at a friend's house, or other community center -- can provide protection within a chosen family of individuals experiencing similar hurdles and empathetic allies.

These safe spaces created by marginalized communities have been life-saving, and are often the only place where individuals with these subordinate identities can get validation and support. But they also impose a mental health burden for those managing the space.

This "invisible work" is typically unpaid, underappreciated by broader society, and performed to meet basic needs for survival, which can lead to compassion fatigue and an inability to further advocate for justice.

Is there a safe space or group that you can count on? What are the protective factors this space provides for you, both immediate and long-term? How do you support the common good? How can taking on a leadership role in these groups contribute to burnout, and what structures can be put in place to distribute the burden and advocate for systemic change?

OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE AS ASSETS

However, no one knows the solutions to local environmental racism and climate change issues better than those most impacted.

Lived experience and first-hand accounts are often more valuable than the surface-level, academic understanding of the problem that "traditional leaders" bring to the table.

Studies also show that taking action is the best way to combat eco-anxiety and eco-grief, and that collective action provides security from retaliation and burnout for all involved. Your voice is essential to solve the problem.

How can you find your pathway to climate leadership? In the next section, we'll explore pathways for climate leadership to mitigate the negative impacts of systemic marginalization.

REFLECT & CONNECT

Use these questions to start a discussion or use them as journaling prompts

1. Have you ever felt that you did not belong in a space? What led you to feel that way? How did that impact your experience? Did you overcome it somehow or allow that to prevent you from participating?

What are you most passionate about? How have you gotten involved in addressing that issue in the past? Do you feel that you have the tools and expertise to work in this field?

CASE STUDY: COMMERCE CITY

Community engagement in **disproportionately impacted communities** has historically been very difficult because the entities in power have worked strategically to exclude folks with subordinate identities from participating.

Cherokee Station was a coal-fired plant in Commerce City converted to natural gas in 2017 due to community protests.[37] 71% of the population living within a 3-mile radius of Cherokee Station identify as people of color, with 45% of people falling within the low-income category.

These are striking numbers when compared to the population of Colorado as a whole: 68% of Colorado residents are white and 27% are considered low-income.

This is just one of dozens of **point-sources of pollution** located in this area, which the residents consider to be a **Sacrifice Zone** –- a community that has undergone industrial development and economic disinvestments that harm the environment without reaping the benefits of these projects.

While the impacts on health of these point-sources of pollution have not been scientifically proven, the numbers indicate this is a case of environmental racism: the census tract surrounding Cherokee Station has an 11.9% cancer rate, nearly twice as high as the cancer rate in the Denver metro area as a whole.

Living near these sources of pollution are often the only location low-income families can afford to buy a home, but the dangers of the **cumulative impacts** of these industries on health is not disclosed prior to purchase.[38]

In an effort to build generational wealth, BIPOC and low-income families are condemned to suffer from asthma, chronic respiratory and cardiac illnesses,

lost wages, school absences, cancer, the cycle of poverty, premature death, and the psychological impacts of systematic dehumanization.

A 2006 Health Impact Assessment conducted by the Tri-County Health Department - which encompassed Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties - found that Commerce City residents, of which more than half are Latine, were far more likely to report their health as fair or poor when compared to Colorado residents as a whole.[39]

Specific outreach efforts were designed to gather this information: a local non-profit, with historic ties to the community and whose bilingual Hispanic outreach coordinator was a local, was utilized to successfully recruit monolingual Spanish-speaking residents to attend community meetings at a family church.

Unfortunately, these efforts are not often replicated to accommodate for the needs of Latine communities and people with other subordinate identities, who often feel severe language and cultural barriers when dealing with healthcare acquisition and political engagement.

The onus of fighting for justice is on the community that is being marginalized, while researchers fail to capture the data due to cultural barriers, thereby erasing their experiences.

COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

"I don't think it's a coincidence that I embraced being queer around the time that I started backpacking. I was 21, and I had spent my whole life trying to fit into a mold and failing — always feeling lost. And then suddenly, there was this new kind of freedom. Adventure was waiting. The world was bigger than I thought. In the space between two mountains, I could just be ME, with none of the pretenses of gender, and I could fall in love with anyone that I wanted to."

- Jenny Gaeng
Political Program Manager, Conservation Colorado

Investing in our sustainability in the movement is an act of revolution. Oppressors burn out the oppressed by having them constantly fight for their survival, making them feel guilty for taking time to heal and regain strength.

However, taking care of our mental health is an essential way to avoid compassion fatigue and the negative effects of eco-anxiety and eco-grief.

SCAN FOR RESOURCES!

We should not feel ashamed of these feelings – they are natural and cannot be avoided. Instead, we must focus on protecting our individual and collective well-being, confronting our traumas in order to heal, and turning these emotions into hope and action when possible.

We must also remember this is collective work – when we need to take a break for our well-being, others are there to take the reins. Justice is a communal effort.

SELF-CARE

Acknowledge your feelings: Feelings are not moral failings. It is perfectly valid and fair to give yourself space to sit with your emotions, understand them, and heal. It is hard to do this work alone, so whenever possible, seek help. Repressing or ignoring

your feelings can lead to worse health outcomes. The only way to heal is to do the difficult work of confronting our traumas with safety and compassion.

Convene with nature: Spending time outdoors and enjoying your personal reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth can help remind you what you are trying to preserve. It increases vitamin D production, which supports mental well-being and increases calm feelings.

Gardening and including other natural elements in your own home, like plants, is a great way to strengthen your relationship with nature from home. If you have the means, explore other options, like visiting a local park, forest bathing, or camping.

Meditate: Controlling your breathing and body scanning brings balance to the body, regulates natural rhythms, calls attention to sensations occurring around you, and encourages presence in the moment. This is a great tool you can use any time you feel overwhelmed or stressed to better understand and regulate your feelings.

Write in a diary or create art: Art and writing can facilitate processing your emotions through creativity. If you feel comfortable sharing your work, this can be a great way to connect with other people experiencing similar feelings, thus reducing the sense of isolation.

Rest: If you are feeling overwhelmed, take the time to disconnect from the work, including taking a break from looking at the news and doom scrolling.

This provides the opportunity to reflect on getting your basic needs met. Are you sleeping 7-8 hours a night and eating nutritious meals? Take some time to analyze your needs and find ways to get them met. Setting up a good routine for yourself is the foundation for your well-being. Additionally, taking a nap can be an act of resistance against burnout and a capitalist system that only values you for your productivity. You are enough just the way you are.

Learn more: Sometimes, understanding the problem can help you connect with the issue better and develop a sense of what is personally at stake for you. It may give you a sense of agency to know that you have the power to impact positive change.

Connect to your heritage: Erasure is a form of violence. In the US, the contributions and histories of communities with subordinate identities are often overlooked or completely wiped out of the broader narrative, which may cause descendants to feel shame or worthlessness as they are not represented in the story of this country. Feeling pride for your identities and your ancestors' wishes to live with dignity can help put your role in perspective. You wouldn't have the rights you have today were it not for those that came before you, and future generations depend on you to continue that fight moving forward.

COMMUNITY CARE

Speak with someone you trust: This can be a therapist, a mentor, or even a friend. The best way to understand your emotions is to share them with others, get validation, and brainstorm how to move forward. Conversely, if anyone reaches out to you, show empathy and listen, if you have the emotional space to do so.

Share your story: We often do not realize how important representation is. Seeing someone with similar anxiety and compassion fatigue express their concerns and describe how they turned that into leadership can help others turn their eco-anxiety into eco-action.

Cultivate safe space: Often, people with subordinate identities do not engage in mental health and environmental work because they do not feel welcome or that their voices matter. You can create or join school clubs, talking circles, hiking groups, etc., and work intentionally to create a space that honors and validates the lived experiences of others. This can be as simple as inviting people with subordinate identities to learn to rock climb in an environment that will protect them from the microaggressions and potential violence they may experience for not fitting the mold of what it means to be outdoorsy, or as involved as creating a formalized **healing circle** with group agreements in which participants share their vulnerability open and honestly.

Practice setting boundaries: In an effort to create a safe space, we may forget about our own needs, but we cannot pour from an empty cup. Knowing your limits and communicating these compassionately is not selfish, it's an investment in your sustainability. Take time to identify what you need from the different relationships in your life, and speak clearly about them proactively. If someone pushes your boundaries, confront them with curiosity and empathy while remaining firm on your needs.

Engage in restorative justice: Solving the climate crisis requires all of us working collectively, but this can be very emotionally heavy labor. Help others heal from interpersonal harm and create coalitions across lines of difference by learning about **restorative justice** and incorporating these elements into your daily life.

Promote mutual aid efforts: When the system feels inequitable and unjust, taking matters into our own hands can encourage hope and a sense of agency. Neighbors helping neighbors to find solutions that align with needs and consider available resources can help reduce **horizontal hostility** and boost a narrative of collective success. These egalitarian efforts can include food sharing, money lending, housing assistance, medical care, and disaster relief.

Support community improvement projects: No one knows the solutions to our local problems better than the local community.

Your voice is imperative in mitigating the climate crisis! Get involved in activism and advocacy with local groups fighting for justice, like Protégete and Conservation Colorado.

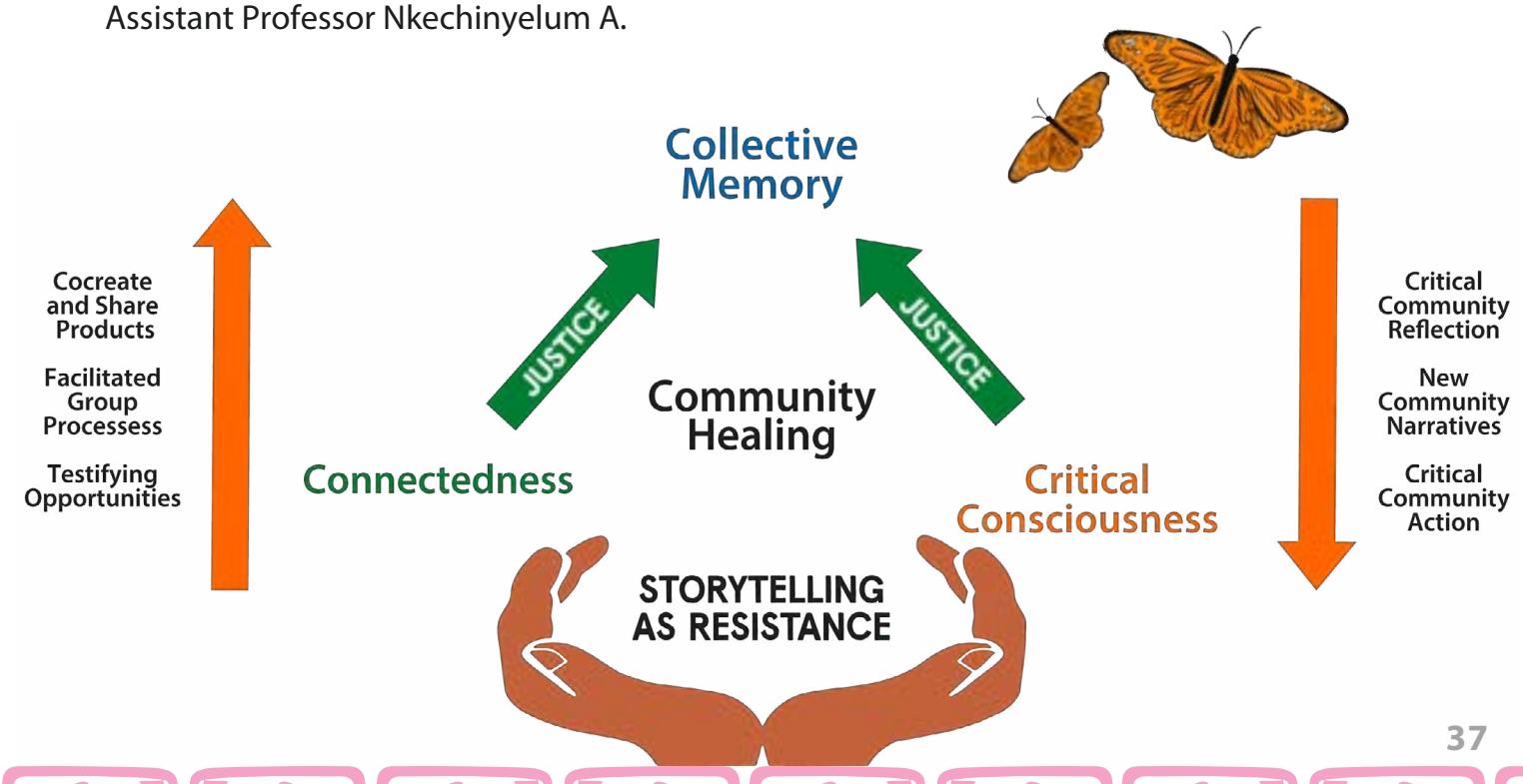
SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

We need everyone's leadership in order to be most effective. Distributing the load makes the weight of our own work more bearable, it optimizes on diverse opinions and viewpoints, and helps generate the best ideas. On page 39, work through the diagram to help you identify where your passions and lived experience may be best applied to address community needs, and find places to connect with others to create systemic change.

STORYTELLING AS RESISTANCE

In a recent paper by Florida A&M University Assistant Professor Nkechinyelum A. Chioneso and colleagues, they found that folks experiencing ongoing racial trauma require a collective experience of community building and fighting for justice to achieve individual, environmental, and community health.[40] At the center is the creation of a robust mutual history and shared narrative that validates the harms experienced, but also provides an opportunity to construct what our reality can be and the potential steps needed to move towards that more just future. Speaking your truth is liberating, not just for you, but for those that are listening and resonating with your lived experience. Take some time to reflect on different venues in which you may be able to share your story: a healing circle, a community advocacy group, social media, letter to the editor, the state capitol, a regulatory hearing, etc.

How can you encourage others to share their stories, too, thereby creating collective memory, connectedness, and critical consciousness?



AS YOU ARE DEVELOPING YOUR STORY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Who is your audience and what do they care about? How can you frame the narrative around their values or interests to help them connect to your lived experience? Try connecting with your target on a shared hobby before diving into the topic at hand if you are having a personal discussion, or connect your story to their main campaign policy goal. Remember, you are speaking to regular people, just like you!

2. What is your goal in sharing your story? What are the values you want to express or the change you are fighting for? How would this change your life, the life of your community, and improve society as a whole?

3. How can you put the audience in your shoes? What details are important to include that will transport the listener without losing their interest? How can you make them feel like they were there (the smells, the sounds, the emotions)? You want to be charismatic and engaging, but keep it within the timeframe allotted so you don't lose your audience!

Use the matrix on the next page to map out your personal story.[41]

Start with your story of self by responding to your personal challenge, choice, and outcome. What are your experiences and values that call you to take leadership on tackling this issue?

Then, consider how this impacts your community, including your audience. What is the story of Us? What is your reason for believing in the support of the people you are speaking to? And finally, how will this impact society as a whole? What is the story of this moment and why is this issue important right now? What is the first step that each person can take to be part of your solution?

Your story doesn't live in a vacuum. It is connected to the experiences of people undergoing the same difficulties as you, and it tells a broader reality about the world we all live in.

MAP OUT YOUR STORY

	CHALLENGE	CHOICE	OUTCOME
SELF	*What is the specific challenge you face? How does that make you feel? Is this just?*	*What is the specific choice that can be made?*	*What happens as a result of this choice? What hope can it give?*
US			
NOW			

CLIMATE ACTION VENN DIAGRAM[42]

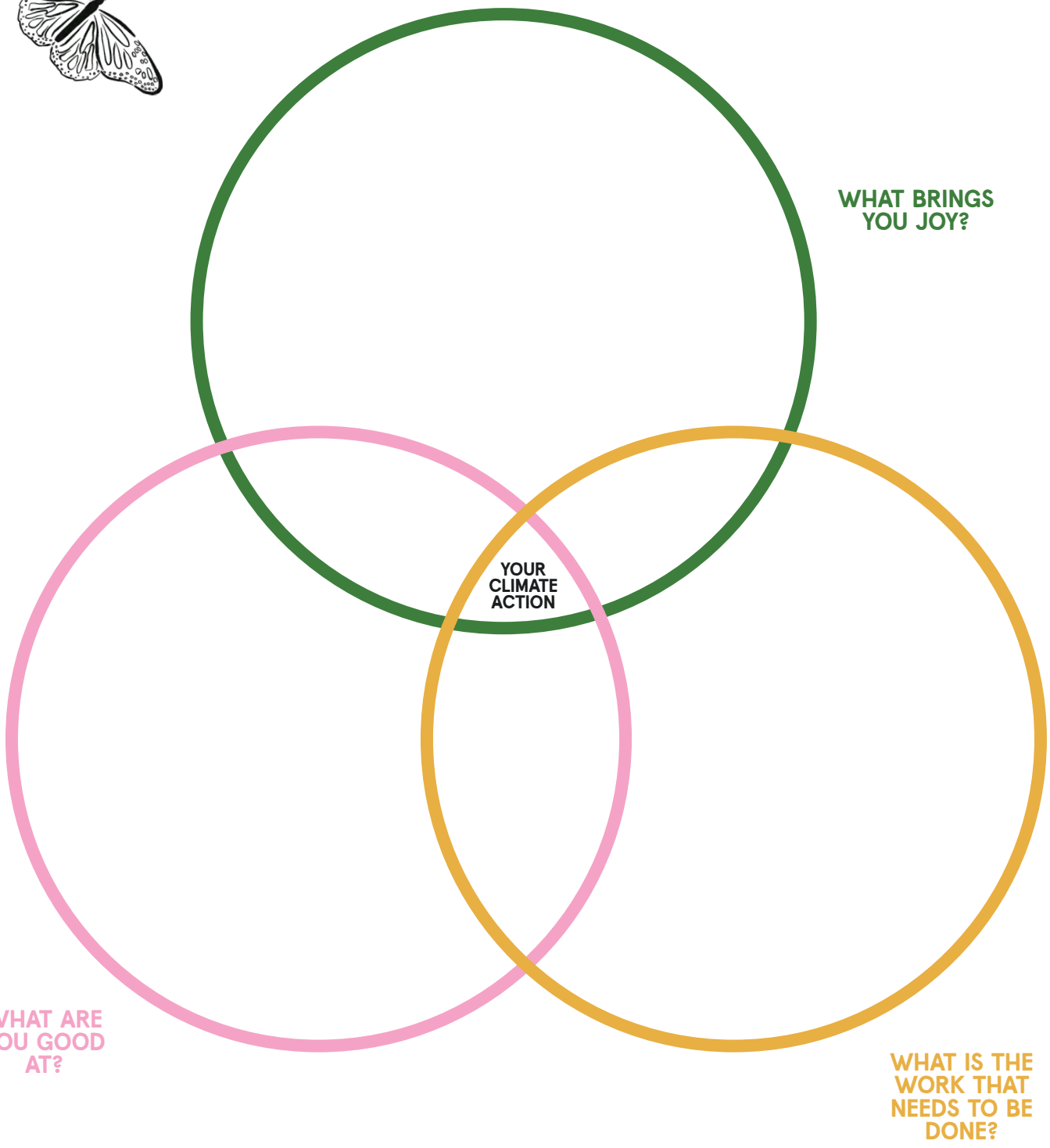
This activity can help you with thinking through, and beginning to plan out, how you can best address climate changes.

In order to help you figure out what your contribution to the climate crisis can be, the venn diagram asks you ***three*** things:

What brings you joy? Think about what makes you excited to wake up in the mornings, what gives you energy and makes you feel hopeful?

What are you good at? Think about your skills and the resources you have access to – if you had to teach someone about something, what are you an expert on? What do you bring to teams that no one else does? If you need help thinking about strengths, check out the wheel of character strengths on the next page.

What is the work that needs to be done? Climate change is a problem that requires system level changes and solutions. Are there specific climate and justice solutions that interest you? For example, creating change through being involved in creating policy, or managing a recycling program or community garden, or educating and training others on climate change advocacy can all be options.


WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY?
YOUR CLIMATE ACTION
WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT?
WHAT IS THE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

WIDENING YOUR CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE[43]

Addressing the climate change crisis requires taking action in our circles of influence through individual, community, and policy/institutional pathways. Individual action steps offer important steps and mindsets to support our own agency, awareness, and well-being.

Some individual actions can include nourishing your mind, body, and spirit to foster sustainable capacity for long-term activism, resting to recharge and build resilience, connecting with your heritage and cultural practices, and/or spending time in nature or with loved ones to embrace hope and joy.[44]

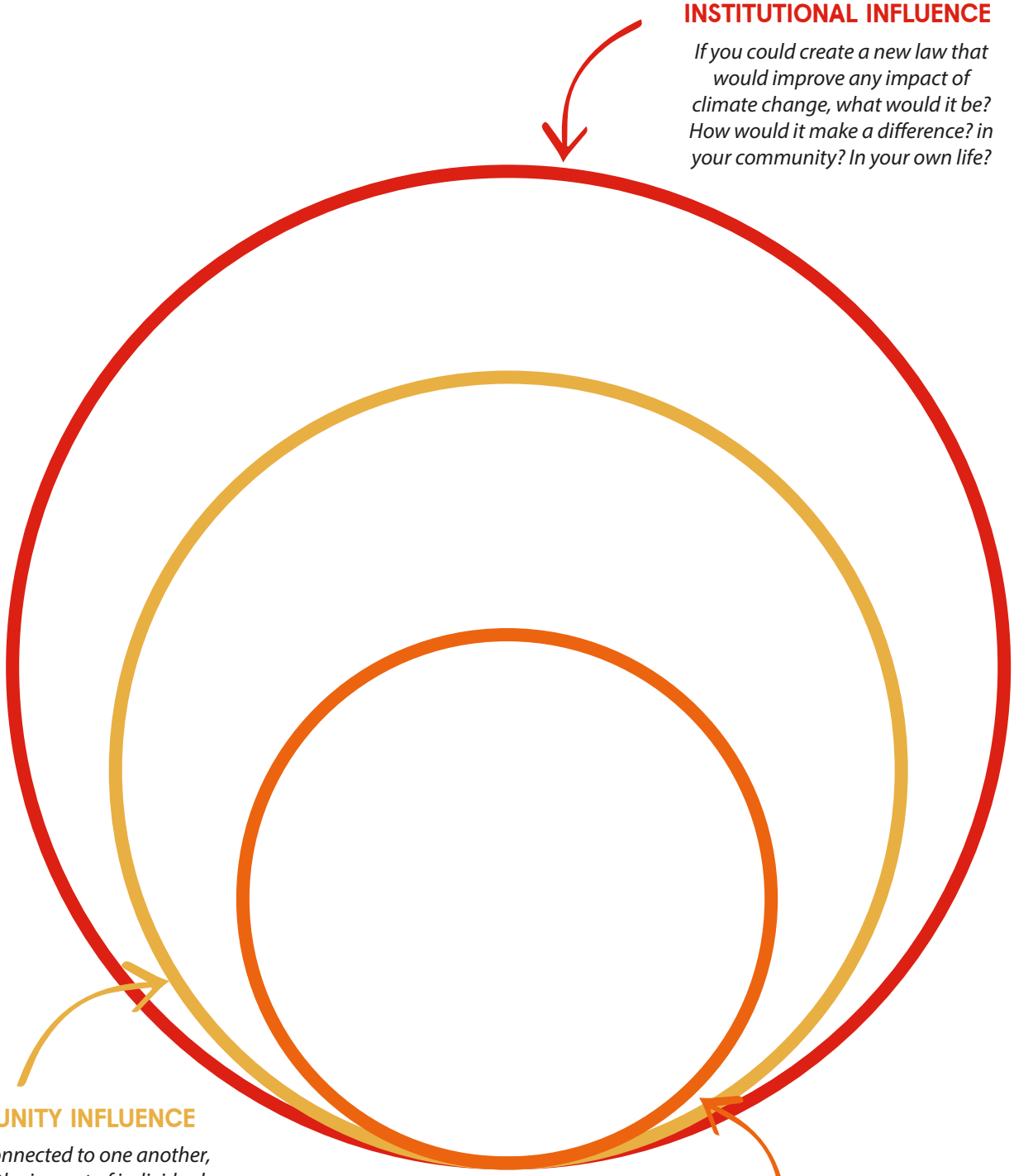
Community action steps can help build connections and shift society's norms toward a climate future that fosters justice, equity, empathy, dignity, and radical care.
For example, these include talking about the impacts (mental, physical, social, political, economic, and environmental) of climate change with your community, sharing coping strategies and resources, supporting and amplifying Indigenous leadership, or getting involved with organizations working toward climate justice like Conservation Colorado and Protégete.

Taking action at the systems level requires system change to mitigate and protect against the worst impacts of climate change.

As an activist, you could call on your local government to prioritize climate action policies, support Indigenous-led initiatives to **indigenize** systems and practices, or mobilize through protests, mutual aid, and direct action.[44]

POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE

If you could create a new law that would improve any impact of climate change, what would it be? How would it make a difference? in your community? In your own life?



COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

We're all connected to one another, what can the impact of individual actions have on our community? And what impact can community action have on individuals?

INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE

What individual actions can people take against climate change?

"Change is a communal effort. If it is really going to happen, we need to provide the space for it to take place. Shaming anyone for being imperfect in their activism is no way to move this conversation forward. We are all existing within systems that need total reconstruction. The movement requires all of us to advocate imperfectly, to hold ourselves and corporations and governments accountable. We must collaboratively work together in our own unique ways in the best way that we can."

- Leah Thomas
Environmentalist, founder of Intersectional Enviromentalist

CONSIDER...

Political positions: Local boards, commissions, committees, city councils, etc., have the most impact on your day-to-day life, have more immediate power to implement change, are more easily influenced by community input, and are more accessible to join compared to higher profile state and federal positions that often get tied up in bureaucracy.

There are positions reserved for community leaders that don't require any specific educational background, but are meant to value and honor the importance of community expertise local leaders bring. Also important to note, many of these positions are paid.

Non-profit involvement: Many advocacy groups provide free trainings and even paid positions, such as fellowships and organizing jobs.

This is a great way to become more knowledgeable on policy, while applying your expertise to your community. Research local environmental groups near you, or join a statewide organization like Protégete.

Government jobs: Is there an issue you care a lot about?

Chances are, there is a division of the government dedicated to that. Look into becoming a park ranger with the National Parks Service, update building codes through weatherization programs, or explore the different divisions of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Renewable energy: Our energy infrastructure is changing, and working in renewables is a lucrative way to get involved.

You can learn more about solar or wind energy, work with your community to ensure they get access to these technologies, or find a job in the field.

Organize your community: Environmental justice is a multifaceted and intersectional issue often misunderstood because our collective environmental narrative has not been created around the experiences of disproportionately impacted communities. Use your platforms to bring the environmental justice narrative forward.

Oftentimes, we feel like if we are not doing everything, we are not doing enough. But bringing environmental justice to the classroom, or implementing conservation efforts into our workplace, is a big step towards increasing awareness and getting others involved. You can organize a waste diversion system, a bike to work day, or a brown bag learning session on a particular environmental policy.

Your friends, neighbors, or colleagues may be interested in environmental justice issues, but may feel too overwhelmed or paralyzed by eco-anxiety to take action, and are looking for leaders to show them the way!

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION	YOUR DEFINITION, NOTES, EXAMPLES
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.	
ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM	The socioeconomic adversity, political marginalization, racism, medical negligence, and academic disinvestments associated with environmental conditions.	
WEATHERING	The outcomes of premature aging and death of people of color due to the combination and compounding effects of intersectional issues.	
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS	The combined and incremental effects of hazardous actions on a particular place and the surrounding community.	
SYSTEMIC RACISM	A form of racism that creates, allows, and supports the unfair treatment and oppression of people of color through laws, policies, practices, and beliefs/attitudes.	
COLONIALISM	An ongoing process that has occurred over multiple generations and includes various processes of forced Indigenous displacement through social, economic, and political systems in order for White people to maintain control and dominance.	
REDLINING	The legalized discriminatory practice that began in 1933 that led to the segregation of neighborhoods by race and class – regulating Black Americans to live in areas that received less government funding and increasing their proximity to toxic industrial facilities.	
GENTRIFICATION	When an under-resourced community receives sudden investments due to wealthy people moving in, pushing out the original inhabitants.	

GLOSSARY

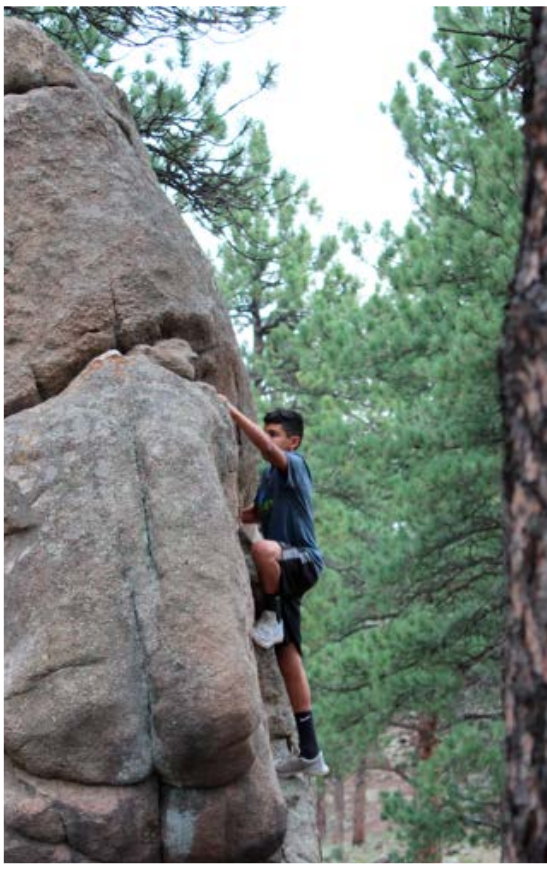
TERM	DEFINITION	YOUR DEFINITION, NOTES, EXAMPLES
SACRIFICE ZONE	A community that has undergone industrial development and economic disinvestments that harm the environment without reaping the benefits of these projects.	
HEAT ISLAND EFFECT	Neighborhoods that experience higher temperatures due to reduced shaded areas and trees.	
MENTAL HEALTH	One's emotional well-being, including how you feel about yourself, the ability to establish and maintain relationships, and the ability to cope with the everyday demands and stresses of life.	
ECO-ANXIETY	A chronic fear of environmental doom; a sense that our ecological foundations are in the process of collapse.	
ECO-GRIEF	Grief felt in response to experienced or anticipated losses in our environment (such as loss of species), as well as the loss of place-based knowledge and identities.	
ONE HEALTH	The approach to public health that recognizes that human wellness is intrinsically tied to that of wildlife and our environmental conditions.	
ACTIVISM	Taking action and using rigorous campaigning to bring about social and political change.	
GENTRIFICATION	Influencing decisions within political, social, and economic structures.	

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION	YOUR DEFINITION, NOTES, EXAMPLES
WHITE MALE EFFECT	When White men, specifically, are hypothesized to perceive lower risk from environmental factors, presumably because they are less likely to be in contact with these hazards.	
DOMINANT IDENTITY	Identities that hold the most historical social power in a society.	
SUBORDINATE IDENTITY	Identities that hold less social capital, lack access to insider information regarding systemic structures, and have been oppressed and erased.	
DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES	Communities that receive more than their fair share of environmental exposure, therefore getting worse health outcomes. These communities tend to be low-income and people of color.	
POINT-SOURCE POLLUTION	A single identifiable source of pollution from a specific location.	
IMPOSTER SYNDROME	The feeling of being not qualified enough to participate in the conversation or take on a leadership role in solving the problem.	
COMPASSION FADE	A reduction in compassionate and helping behavior as the number of those in need increases.	
COMPASSION FATIGUE	An empathy overload that causes an a reduction in capacity due to the repeated exposure to the trauma and suffering of others.	

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION	YOUR DEFINITION, NOTES, EXAMPLES
SELF-CARE	Actions one can take to promote health, healing, and restoration which allows one to sustain long-term involvement in justice work. It is a revolutionary act of resistance.	
COMMUNITY CARE	Expanding care practices to benefit the entire community, recognizing that we are an ecosystem that depends on each other.	
HEALING CIRCLE	A group of supportive community members with agreements in which participants share their vulnerability open and honestly.	
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	A system of criminal justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community at large.	
MUTUAL AID	Support or aid provided by collective effort within a community, especially in an emergency or to help those in need. Mutual aid practices are often employed by underserved communities to bridge the gap that the system is failing to provide for its residents.	
HORIZONTAL HOSTILITY	In-fighting or fractionalism within groups with subordinate identities. This is often fostered intentionally by the dominant group to remove blame from the creation and perpetuation of an unjust system.	
INDIGENIZE	The recognition and implementation of Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, and perspectives, to replace discriminatory systems of oppression developed by White supremacy culture.	



SCAN FOR REFERENCES!

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

A TOOLKIT TO CONVERT ECO-ANXIETY TO ECO-ACTION

"CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE."

- Audre Lorde

A poet, essayist, librarian, feminist, and equal rights activist